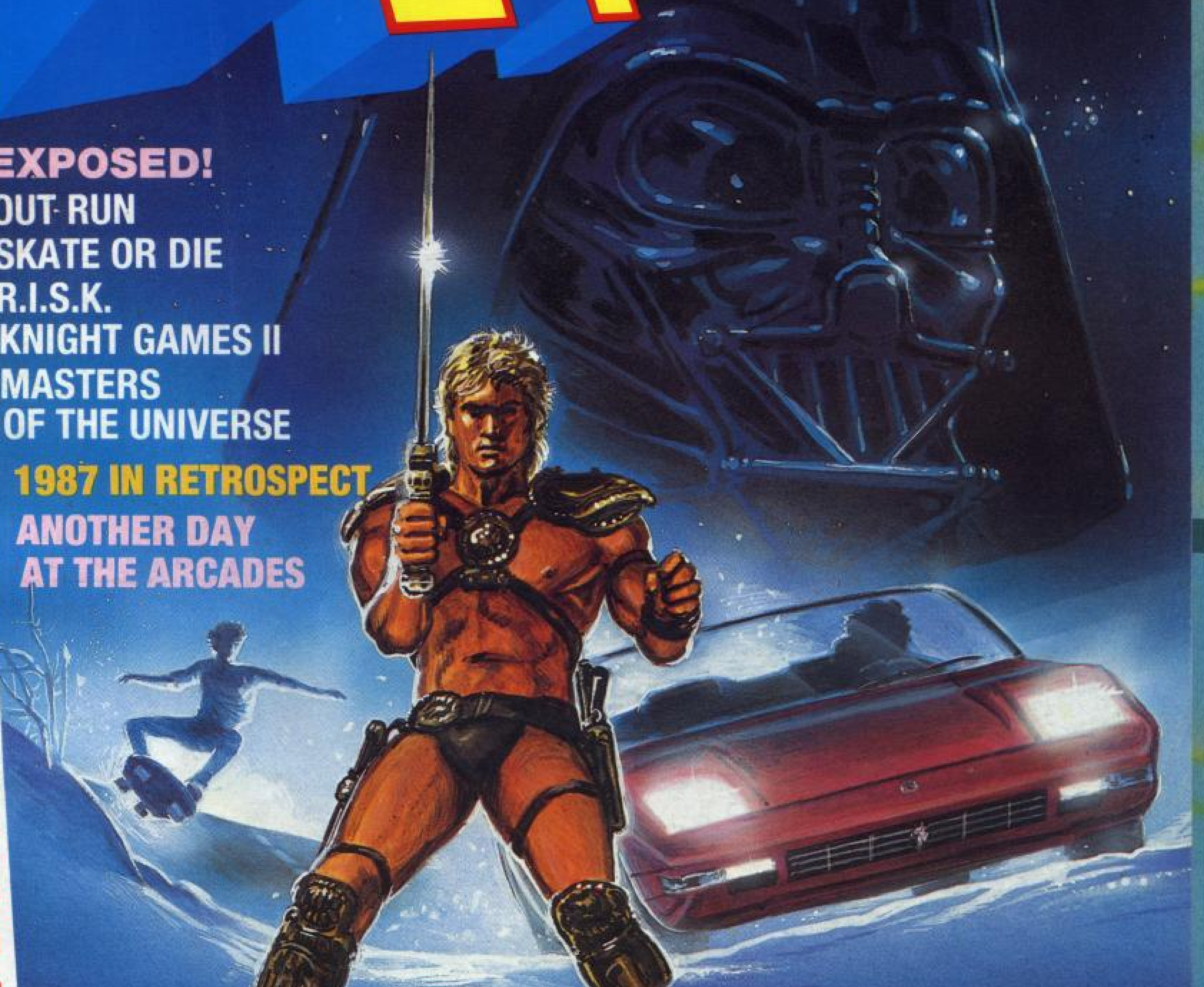
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**Christmas Special**

MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



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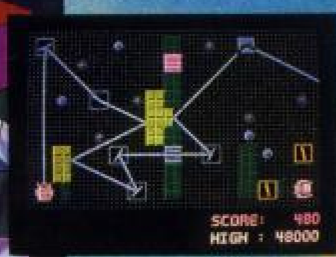
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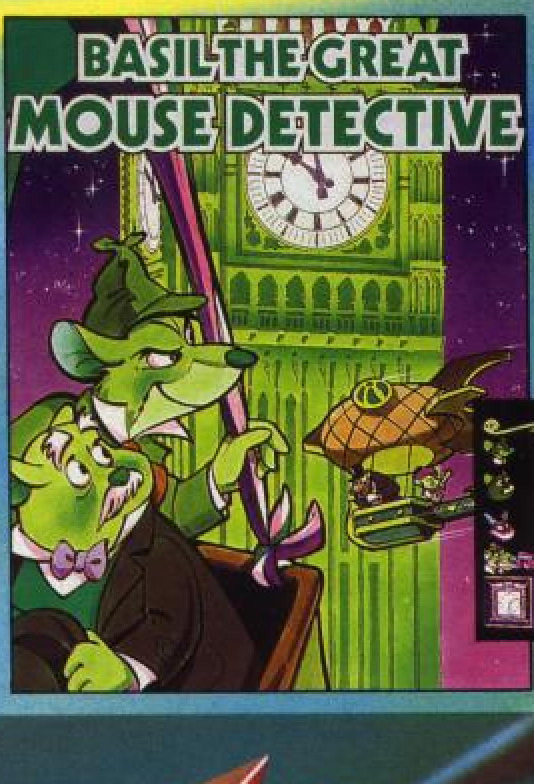



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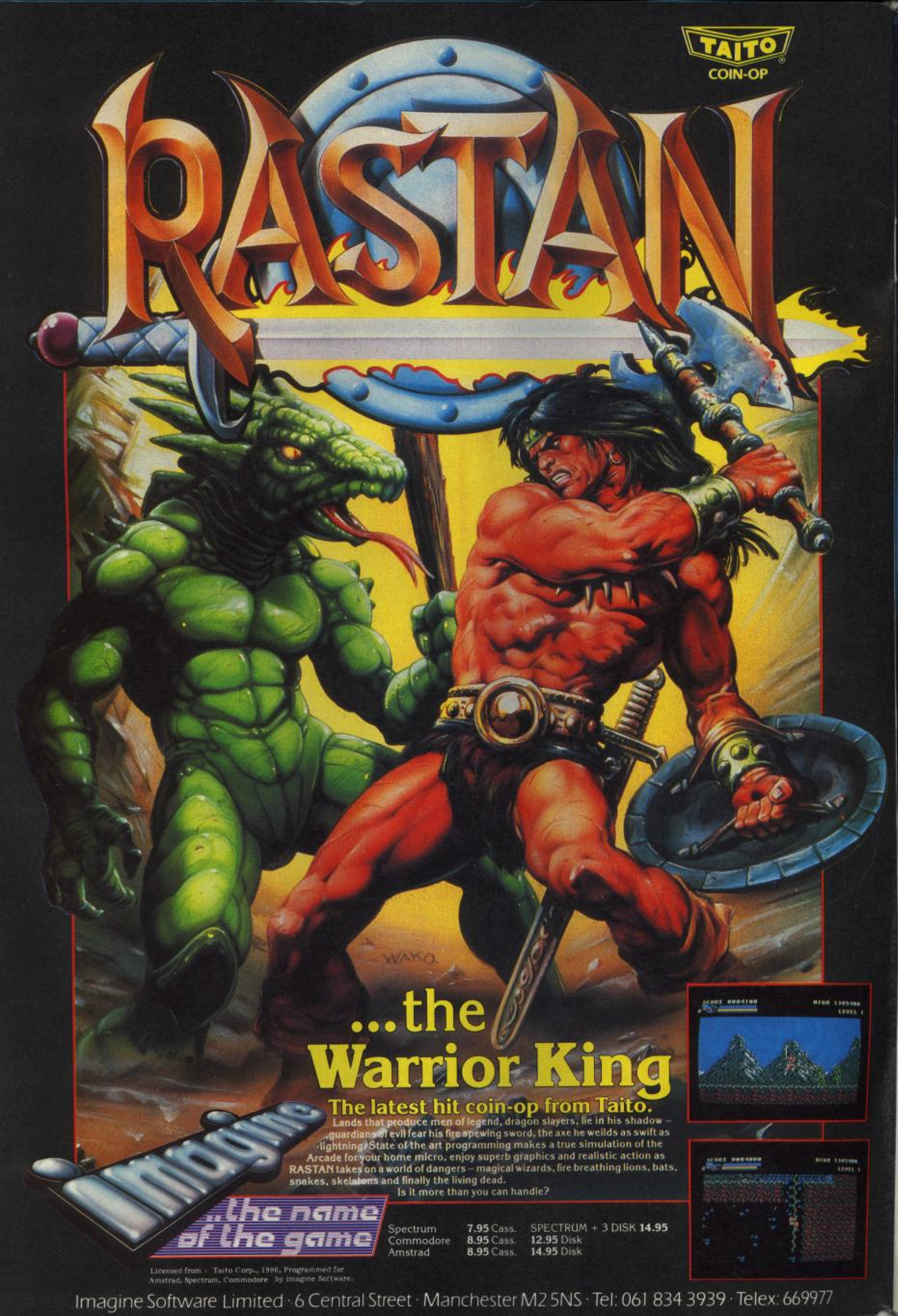

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# ZZAP! 64

No. 33 JANUARY 1988

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£200 of weight training equipment courtesy of Gremlin's MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE competition

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Win a brilliant hi-fi system in Gremlin's fantastic COSMIC CAUSEWAY comp

**188 CASIO SYNTHESISER WORTH £250**
Take home a Casio SK400 synthesizer, courtesy of Ocean

'Back dogs!' cried the bearded Pirate as he swung through the window on a rope. 'On January the 14th 1988, ZZAP! Issue 34 goes on sale – buy it, or I'll slice ye gizzards out'. And after clearing up the glass, he left to catch the bus home.

**Editor**
Julian Rignall
**Assistant Editor**
Steve Jarratt
**Staff Writers**
Daniel Gilbert, Lloyd Mangram, Paul Sumner
**Contributing Writers**
Mark Caswell, Nik Wild, Mel Croucher, Philippa Irving, Brendon Kavanagh
**Editorial Assistant**
Glenys Powell
**Production Controller**
David Western
**Art Director**
Oliver Frey
**Assistant Art Director**
Mark Kendrick
**Production**
Wayne Allen, Jonathan Rignall, Matthew Uffindell, Nik Orchard,
**Photography**
Cameron Pound, Michael Parkinson
**Advertisement Manager**
Roger Bennett
**Advertisement Assistant**
Andrew Smales
**Subscriptions**
Denise Roberts
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Editorial Production
**1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ**
**☎ 0584 5851**
Mail Order & Subscriptions
**PO Box 10, Ludlow Shropshire SY8 1DB**
**☎ 0584 5620**

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# ZZAP! ED



# WALKING IN THE AIR

A very warm welcome to this years ZZAP! Christmas Special – which is positively bursting at the staples with news, previews, features, competitions and some more 3D sections – so dig out those special specs that were given away with issue 31!

A new arrival this month comes in the shape of Dan Gilbert, who has jumped into the position vacated by Nik Wild, who recently left ZZAP! to become Assistant Editor of THE GAMES MACHINE.

Dan originally formed half of Commodore User's Play to Win team, but has decided 'to move on to better things'. Hailing from the sleepy village of Heathfield, East Sussex, he is 19 years old and drives a clapped out Talbot Sunbeam ('it's cheap and it works – honest').

His impressive array of qualifications include French, German and Economics, which he studied because he wanted to become a Eurotunnel Train driver ('what do you mean? I hate the idea of the Eurotunnel'). A keen computer gamer (surprise, surprise), Dan enjoys playing beat 'em ups ('*Fist* is my favourite'), loves the *Ultima* series ('they've got unbelievable depth'), and partakes in a little *International Soccer* every now and then ('all the others make me as sick as a parrott, Brian'). He's also a keen adventure player, and co-wrote a book called *The Adventurer's Handbook* ('I solved the adventures, and Mike Gerrard published the solutions') and also enjoys athletics, playing squash, basketball, and badminton ('I used to be a mega-sports person, you know'). Other interests include watching films ('*Alien* is brilliant, and *Airplanes* I and II are tremendous'), listening to very loud music on his three hi-fi systems ('I upgrade, but keep forgetting to sell the old models') and occasionally partakes in some very amateur photography ('nudge, nudge') using his Canon T-80 ('it's very flash, and virtually idiot proof').

Right, that's enough for now – I hope you enjoy the magazine. Before I go, may I wish you a very Merry Christmas, and an equally Happy New Year. See you in '88

J Rignall

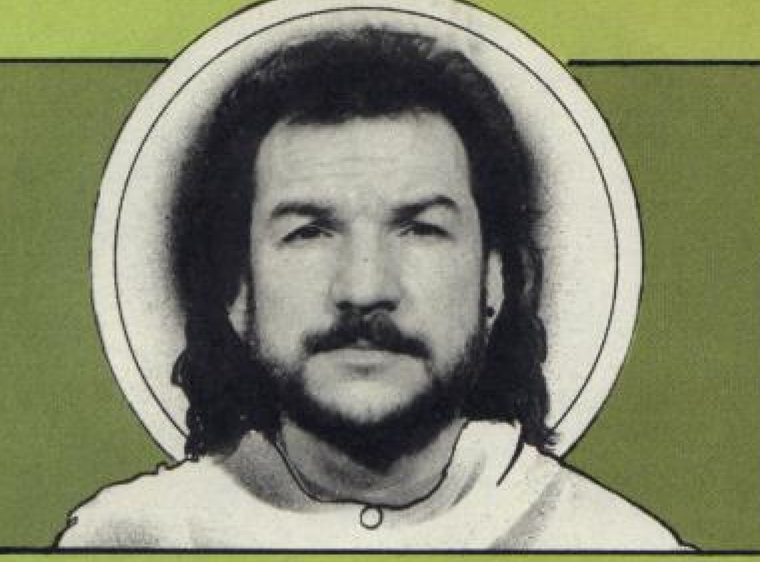
**Julian Rignall**

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# Mel Croucher's UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

### WINTER SOLSTICE, (Republic of Hypothermia)

My gnomes and fairies have just delivered a sackful of chimney-contents! The computing world seems to be under the delusion that I am not only the Software Messiah but also Santa Claus. Ah well, may as well read them. 'Dear Santa, please bring me a wet-me pet-me Claire Hirsch dolly, a copy of *The Truth* Humour magazine (only 95 pee and featuring the greatest living writers this side of Ludlow), another wet-me pet-me Claire Hirsch dolly 'cos I've decoupled the first one, a John George Jones Mascara Kit, eternal youth (the last one ran away), a cunning stunt, Oli Frey's autograph (blank cheque provided), world peace (on second thoughts make that a copy of *Barbarian*), an 8-bit bar of Dairy Milk, and another 32-bit wet-me pet-me Claire Hirsch dolly.' Better not publish who wrote that one, or Mr Hirsch will be heading into North London with a very special delivery. Here are a few of the more sensible requests: CRL's **Clement Chambers** would like 'IBM'. No problem Clembabe, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile is targeted on Carpenters Road at this very moment. Code Master **Richard Darling** has requested 'The Encyclopaedia of Young, Free and Single Women of Oxfordshire, plus a packet of instant hangover cures'. Well now Dick, I will be delivering your request on Christmas Eve, just as you ask, namely the class list of St Theresa's Junior Girl's Nunnery and a letter from the VAT Inspector. Next.

### CRIPNESS EVE, MIDNIGHT MESS, ST SAMANTHAS CATHEDRAL

Micronet's **Chris** Lunchbreaks **Bourne** wants Santa to bring him a 'a semi-automatic 20 shots per minute Uzi water pistol'. Sorry mate, but I think there are quite enough little squirts in computing already. Robtek's **Robert Zysblat** would like 'people to stop bugging me with stupid questions'; I will never mention your name again Mr Zysblat. **David Whittaker**, creator of music for *Glider Rider* and *The Tube* has sent in a very modest request: 'a white Toyota Supra 3-litre automatic, with injection and leather seats'. Unfortunately, Anneka Rice is already the property of my second to last paragraph, but that's the best description I've ever heard of her. **David Martin**, last seen snuggling up to Nigel Mansell before his unfortunate accident, has written a very poetic note; what he wants in his stocking is 'deep snow and more trees'. Not sure about the heroin, David, but I can assure you that most computer folk are indeed as thick as two short planks.

### CRISPNESS DAY: BIRTH OF HER ROYAL MAJESTY IN A LOWLY STABLE THAT USED TO BE GREENBELT

Many thanks to all BAUDWALKERS for sending me your Silly-Names-In-Computing-Nominations. I will give each one the serious attention it deserves. This month's Silly Names Award goes to **Rudi Szczerba** (which means 'my reindeer has a vile skin disease') of Polaroid UK Ltd, who has invited me to use a new I-D card system for the security identification of all my employees. As Mel Croucher Ltd employed the grand total of one person, or two if I wake up with a split personality, I think this is a splendid idea, because last full moon I could hardly recognise myself, what with the hairy palms, erect tail and slavering chops. Speaking of which, why is Alan (I used to be a werewolf but I'm alright n-oo-oo-ow) Sugar the model for **Viz Design**'s *Werewolves Of London* advert? He's been trying to keep his terrible misfortune a secret for years. Speaking of silly names, **Shelagh Tuite** of Gremlin Graphics, whose name, when translated from the Gaelic, means 'I have recently clubbed my pet canary to death', writes me my best letter of the month. This is it: 'Dear Mel, Congratulations !!! You are the lucky winner of the 2nd prize in our 'Charles Bronson Lookalike' competition. Please find enclosed your prize, a Midi Hi-Fi with CD player. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the delay in despatching your prize to you.' The 'enclosed' prize is truly magnificent, and I christen it with a short burst of Johnny Marr doing Marc Bolan impressions. My only regret is the uniformed Securicor delivery man who shimmered behind my stained glass front door, standing without. So I gave him one. I mistook him for a *Deathwish 3* street scummer and blew his mind off with a Lebanese Gold limpet mine, then blew his head off with a Magnum of Dom Perignon, before I realised that he was not only on my side, but all over my Welcome Mat. Gremlin's **Ian Stewart** has already confessed that the only reason I didn't win first prize is because I can't help smiling, and ol' granite-face Bronson never smiles. Well you can't help smiling when your lips have been shot off can you? Seriously folks, I am deeply touched and laterally moved by this Award, my first since winning the Golden Gob Of The Year Award for computer journalism, and I assure you that I will put it to the best use that I can think of. I must confess that I cannot take all the credit for my winning entry in Gremlin's compo. My tame starving-artist-in-the-garret Robin (the Piman is our copyright no matter what Interceptor think) Grenville-Evans was responsible for the airbrushed Mel=Bronson entry, and he deserves his fair share of the loot. So if you're reading this Evans, you can come round and listen to Mr Marr any time you wish. Excepting when the 24 hours period has 'day' as its ending, I'll be busy then.

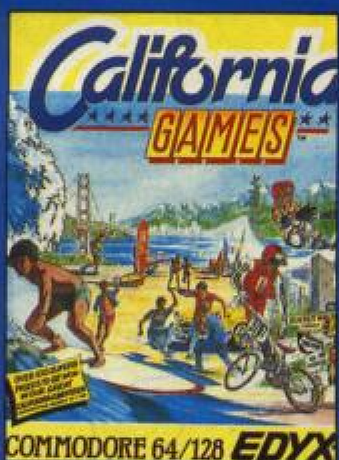
### NEW EARS EVE (Planet Vulcan)

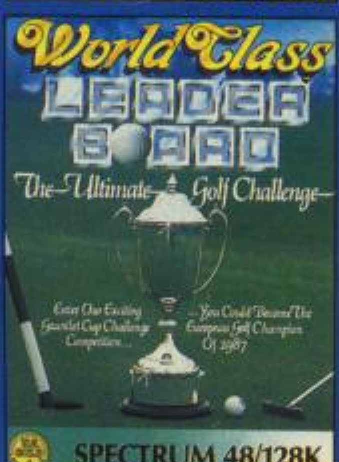
News of **Domark**'s latest plunge into the licensing depths, now that *Star Wars* has been reduced to a three page advert: with Bonny Langford currently unavailable, the barrel-bottom scrapers have secured the endorsement of the second most irritating woman on television, she of the blinding teeth and pneumatic buttocks **Anneka Rice**, whose name is the Norwegian for 'I have cereal crops in my pantyhose'. I await the arrival of *Treasure Hunt* with baited pen.

### ANNIVERSARY OF SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS (King Harrods January Sale)

Speaking of treasures, **Simon Treasure** has got a very sensible name, especially his middle name, which I have promised never to reveal, which is **Barrington**. Simon keeps popping out all over the place between visits to his bouffant backcomber at Headlines. No sooner does he cease censoring my articles for *Computer Trade Weekly*, than he mangles my Software Gallup Charts, tries to get me to say nice things about *Jack The Ripper* and plies me with something American and tinned which purports to be 'lager', whatever that is. A Treasure indeed probably dug up with the remains of Tutenkhamen. Just a sec, here's Simon's letter to Santa; hmm, very suspect requests here, he is hankering after 'Coreen Russell as my personal assistant because I'm really into people and love, plus a 1961 salmon pink Fender Stratocaster and a pair of gold lame underpants.' Unfortunately Santa is not allowed to deliver to anyone with the middle name of Barrington. As anyone who went to the PCW Show will know, the man with the most sensible name in the Industry is Show organiser, **Mike Blackman**, who is of the tropical persuasion. Many of us are following his example, I myself am looking for a deed poll on which to inscribe my newly appropriate name, Mel Pinkishman. **Alan Sugar** is to be known as Alan Batteryacidman, Domark's Mark Strachan and Dominic Wheatley are now called Anneka Rice's Braman for reasons that I can't quite work out, *Soft And Cuddly* author **John George Jones** is really called Hugh Anchorman and Ram Jam's **George Stone** is renamed Lord Lucan for reasons that Activision's lawyer will explain. Firebird Intergalactic **Phil Pratt** is changing his name to, um, Phil Pratt, and by all means least, Commodore has appointed a new president named **Max Toy**. My lawyers have advised me to scrap the final joke. Pity, it was all about this guy with the ludicrous name of Max Toy, who stuck four Duracells . . .



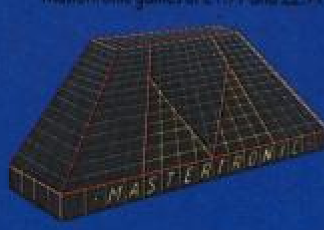




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# WOOLWORTHS

# TOP 30

# COMPUTER SOFTWARE

## DECEMBER 1987

| POSITION | TITLE | SOFTWARE HOUSE | MACHINE TYPE | PRICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Combat School | Ocean | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 2. | Thundercats | Elite | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 3. | California Games | U.S. Golc | C64 | 9.99 |
| 4. | 6 Pack II | Elite | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 5. | World Class Leaderboard | U.S. Gold | Spectrum | 8.99 |
| 6. | Indiana Jones | U.S. Gold | Spectrum | 8.99 |
| 7. | Renegade | Imagine | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 8. | World Class Leaderboard | U.S. Gold | C64 | 9.99 |
| 9. | 6 Pack II | Elite | C64 | 9.95 |
| 10. | Indiana Jones | U.S. Gold | C64 | 9.99 |
| 11. | Gunship | Microprose | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 12. | Renegade | Imagine | C64 | 8.95 |
| 13. | Nebulus | Hewson | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 14. | Star Wars | Domark | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 15. | Thundercats | Elite | C64 | 9.95 |
| 16. | Match Day II | Ocean | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 17. | Star Wars | Domark | C64 | 9.95 |
| 18. | Airbourne Ranger | Mircoprose | C64 | 14.95 |
| 19. | Computer Hits 4 | Beaujolly | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 20. | Thundercats | Elite | Amstrad | 8.95 |
| 21. | Live Ammo | Ocean | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 22. | Action Force | Virgin | Spectrum | 9.95 |
| 23. | 720' | U.S. Gold | Spectrum | 9.99 |
| 24. | Bubble Bobble | Firebird | Spectrum | 7.95 |
| 25. | Buggy Boy | Elite | C64 | 9.95 |
| 26. | Computer Hits 4 | Beaujolly | C64 | 9.95 |
| 27. | Zig Zag | Mirrorsoft | C64 | 9.95 |
| 28. | Bubble Bobble | Firebird | C64 | 8.95 |
| 29. | Ace II | Cascade | Spectrum | 8.95 |
| 30. | Action Force | Virgin | C64 | 9.95 |










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The long-awaited conversion of Konami's *Combat School* has finally arrived, giving everybody a chance to have a drill instructor all of their own.

There are seven 'events', starting with the assault course. The player waggles the joystick as fast as possible to make his marine run, and pressing fire jumps over oncoming obstacles.

Next is the first firing range. Thirty five pop-up targets are hit within a set time limit to qualify, using the moving machine gun sight.

After that is the iron man race, in which the player waggles the joystick up and down to run, swim or canoe over treacherous terrain. Obstacles are dodged by moving left or right, or jumping over them.

Following this is the second firing range. A hand-held machine gun is used to destroy fifty robot tanks as they appear at the top of the screen.

An arm-wrestle with the instructor comes next, and is a test of left-right waggling. Simply, the faster waggler wins.

The player tackles the third firing range next. A mixture of normal and prohibited targets pop up. Should the wrong ones be hit, the gunsight freezes until the current batch of targets have disappeared.

The final event, a hand to hand fight with the instructor, is loaded separately. For successful graduation, the instructor is beaten within a set time limit.

Should the player manage to graduate, he is asked to partake in a secret mission in which he must use all of the skills learned in school to rescue a hostage from the American embassy.

Failure to meet the qualifying requirements in any event except the arm wrestling ends the game. However, if the player only fails by a small amount, he may still qualify by performing a fixed number of chin-ups within thirty seconds by waggling left to right on the joystick.



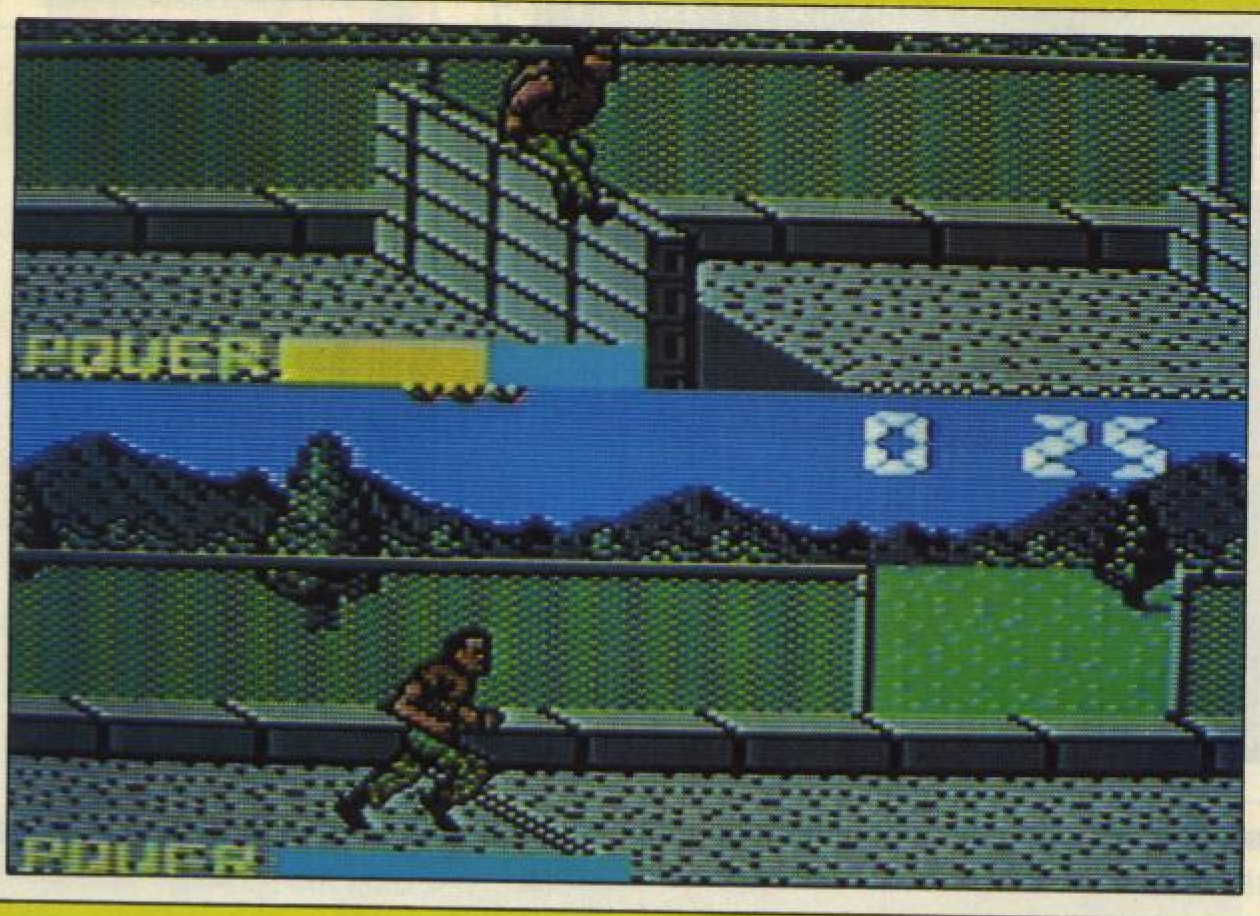

**Considering the problems posed by the lack of a trackball, Ocean have coped magnificently in converting** Combat School**, losing none of the original's feel! In addition to the excellent graphic detail, there's also a short but brilliant Martin Galway tune on the title screen – and as you might expect, he wants to be your drill instructor! The only criticism I have is that in the target shooting scenes, the joystick control feels very awkward, and the timing of shots is a bit strange compared with the arcade. If you like your games a little on the physical side, go out and get** Combat School.




Combat School **is brilliant – definitely one of the best arcade conversions around. It combines a wide variety of gaming skills over seven military 'events' and one combat mission. Even the most straightforward waggling screens are made difficult, with obstacles to avoid or jump over. The three shooting events require a mixture of speedy reflexes, good hand-to-eye co-ordination and precision, and the fight gives the player a chance to test his beat 'em up prowess. The final mission is similar to** Kung-Fu Master, **but it's very hard, and the instructions are deliberately vague about how it should be tackled. The multiload system isn't too painful, although it is annoying when you last about three seconds on the final mission and have to start all over again! Adding even more value for money is a free** Gryzor **demo!** Combat School **is definitely recommended, but make sure you've got a couple of new joysticks in reserve!**



► ***Combat School*'s first discipline is the assault course**




**PRESENTATION 84%**
One or two player options, and free *Gryzor* demo on the 'B' side.

**GRAPHICS 88%**
Nicely animated sprites, but a little crude at times.

**SOUND 91%**
Brilliant title tune, and good music and effects throughout.

**HOOKABILITY 90%**
Easy to pick up and play, but challenging nevertheless.

**LASTABILITY 81%**
Even when the final mission is solved, the action remains appealing.

**OVERALL 91%**
A very faithful conversion that offers exceptional playability.

ZZAP! TEST SIZZLER

# DRILLER

**Incentive, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk, joystick or keys**

**●An incredible alien experience in Incentive's much-heralded 3D spectacular**

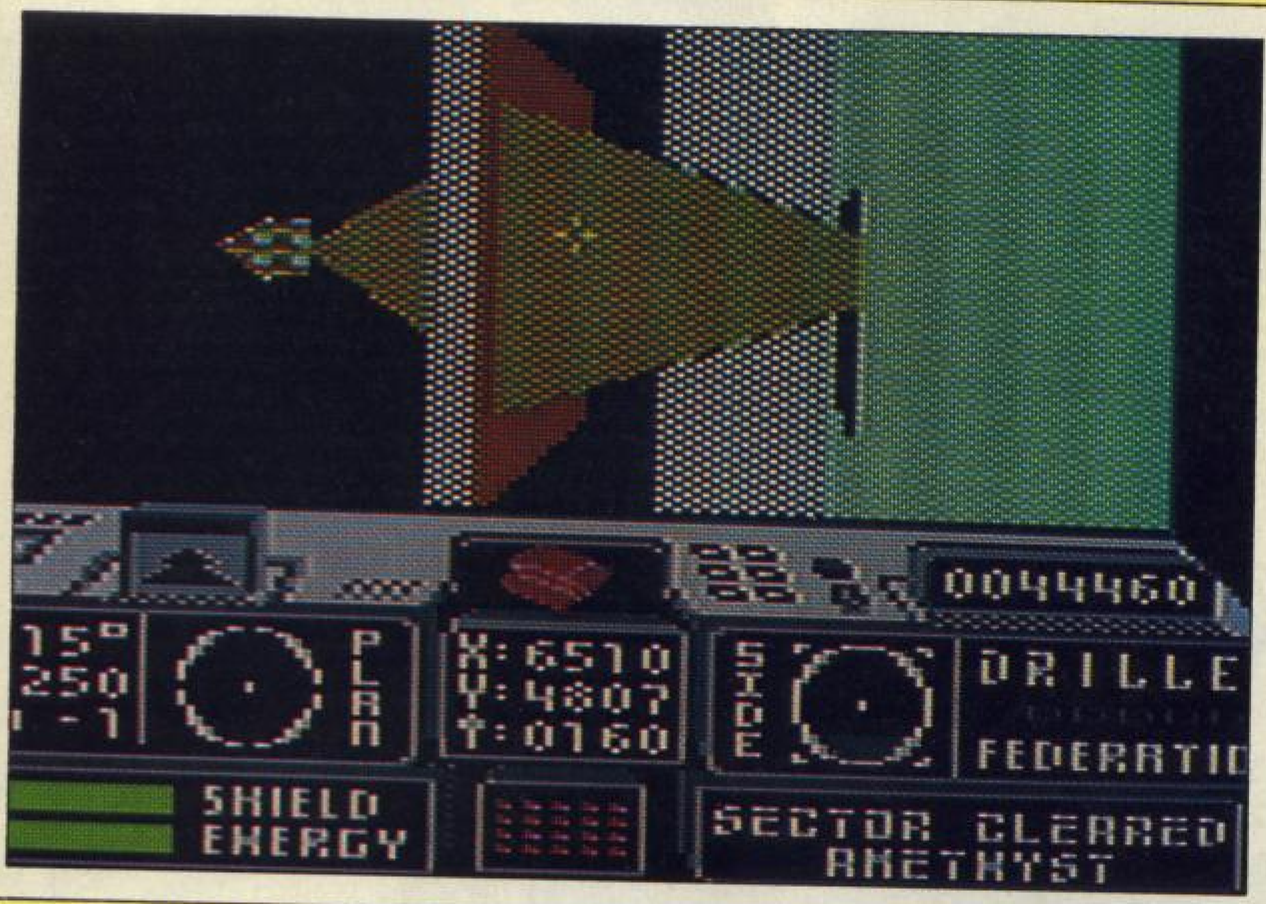
Mitral is a distant moon, once mined by exiled criminals. The mining has caused a build-up of gas beneath the moon's surface, which must be drawn off to prevent Mitral exploding.

The player explores the deserted moon in an excavation probe, finding gas pockets and placing drilling rigs in each of its 18 sectors. The action is displayed in filled 3D, using a first person perspective to view the entire panorama.

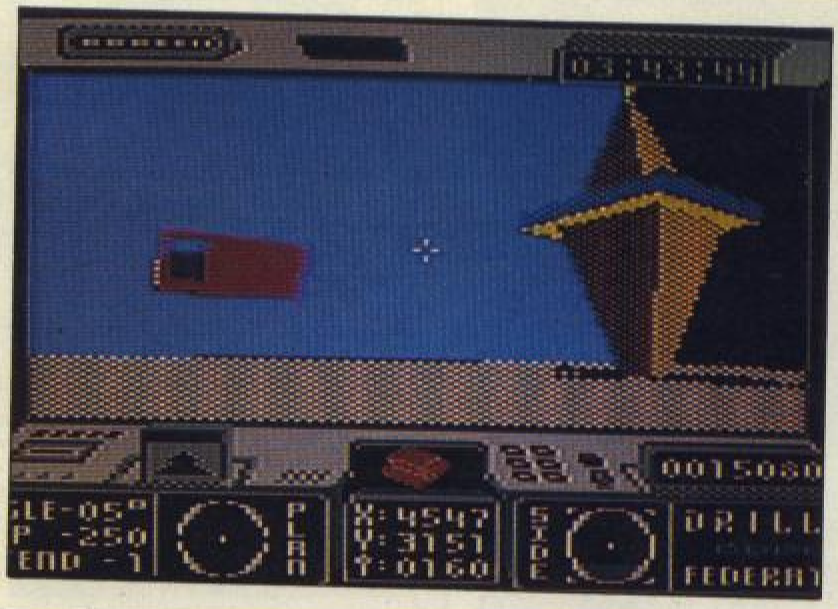
Mitral's topography is seen through a large window, with the probe's controls beneath. The vehicle has controllable speed and turn angle (effectively altering the step size between frame updates), and the probe's main body can also be tilted left or right, elevated or lowered to gain more visual information.

Mitral comprises large open squares surrounded by walls, blocks, buildings, steps, trenches and acid rivers. Laser beacons are also encountered and fire whenever approached. The probe's defensive shield provides some protection, but is entirely diminished by repeated hits. To survive, the probe either retreats out of range, moves behind the beacon, or fires upon it with its own targetable lasers. Some beacons can also be neutralised by severing their power supplies.

For more mobile exploration, the probe docks with a reconnaissance jet when its hangar is found. As with other features, such as the teleporters, entry to the building is reliant upon solving a puzzle else-




► Another of *Driller*'s mysteries



► Which way next?



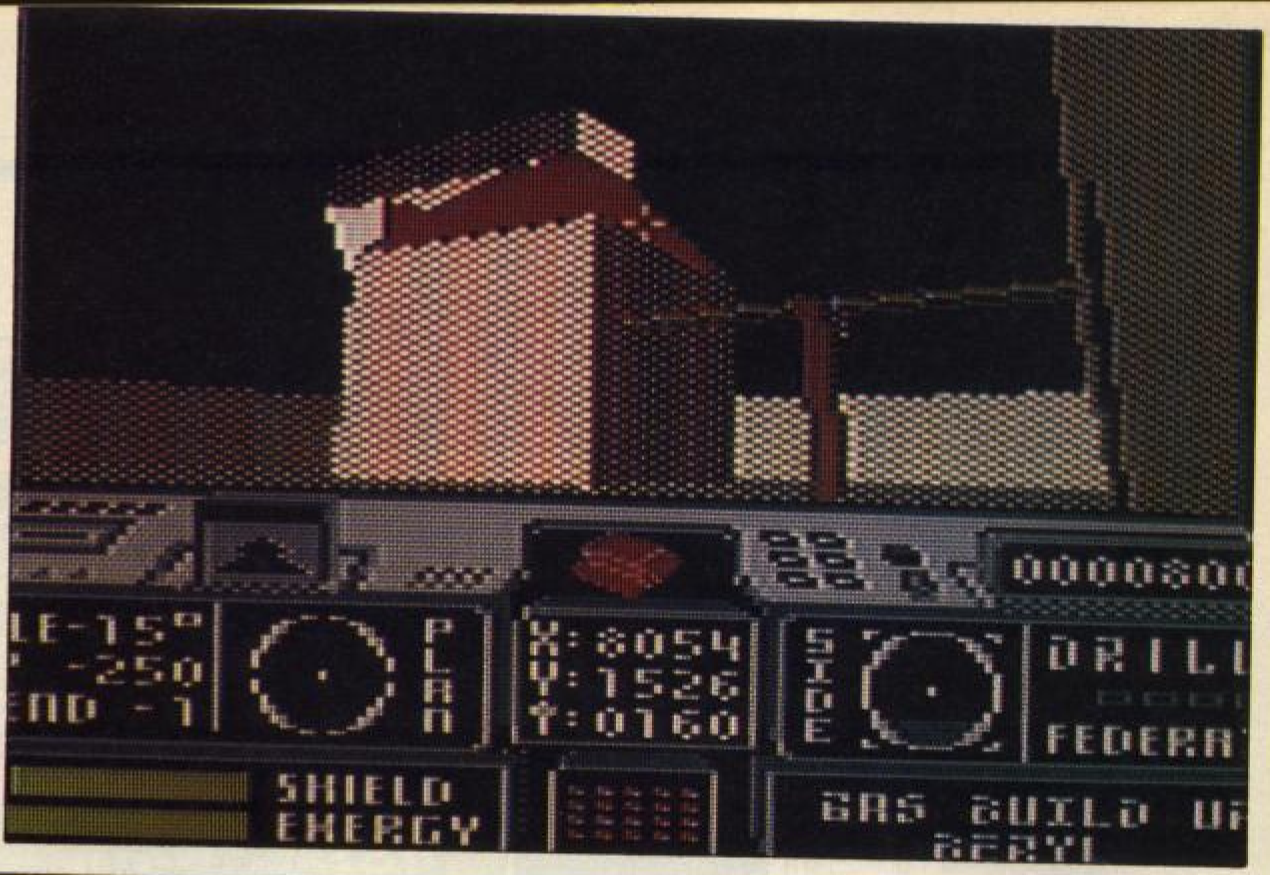

**The only program ever to get close to simulating an entire 3D world was the vector graphic wonder, Mercenary. Now Driller has appeared, and takes the concept one stage further with filled-in graphics. The screen update looks remarkably slow, but when you're playing it feels quite fast, and doesn't at all impede progress. The graphics are truly outstanding, and generate a thoroughly convincing and realistic world. The player is given complete freedom to explore, and it's quite difficult to actually appreciate how far the program can be taken. There are tiny nooks and crannies to squeeze through, and switches and secret passages are often found in the most unlikely of places. The puzzles are extremely well thought out, and are of the type you suddenly realise how to solve just when you're going to bed! The 15 minute long soundtrack suits the action perfectly, and really adds to the atmosphere. Driller is a superb piece of software, and adds a whole new dimension to computer gaming. An absolute must.**




**After seeing other versions of Driller at the PCW show, I had my doubts about the forthcoming 64 version. It finally arrived and I saw it move. My doubts grew. Then I played it . . . and it's absolutely captivating. I haven't had my imagination dragged into a game so much since playing Mercenary – and that's saying something. The atmosphere created by the graphics and, in my opinion, the best soundtrack to appear this year is phenomenal. OK, Driller isn't the fastest game in the world, but this is only a minor handicap since the gameplay isn't dependent on moving quickly anyway. The game is polished, as user-friendly as possible, and incredibly interesting to play, with a myriad of perplexing puzzles and mysteries to unfold. Go out and get Driller, and don't forget to buy a couple of gallons of Midnight oil, because you'll be burning plenty of it!**




**I must admit that I had reservations when I first saw** Driller **demonstrated, as it seemed to be very much in the** Mercenary **mould, except much slower. How wrong could I be? The game is far more involving (yes, incredible but true), and has a large number of three dimensional problems to solve. These aren't usually just a case of finding the right doorway to walk through, but often involve examination of a whole area, an analysis of its active sections, and possibly some strategic lasering. The atmosphere is incredible, and is helped in no small way by the absolutely stunning soundtrack – without doubt one of the best ever. The game also features excellent in-game presentation, with such innovations as options to change the number of degrees the ship turns through each move, and a graphics update meter, so you know the screen is still being refreshed, even when it has to slow down for detailed scenes. You can't help feeling that Incentive have covered every detail . . .**




▲ **Who knows the secret of that tower?**

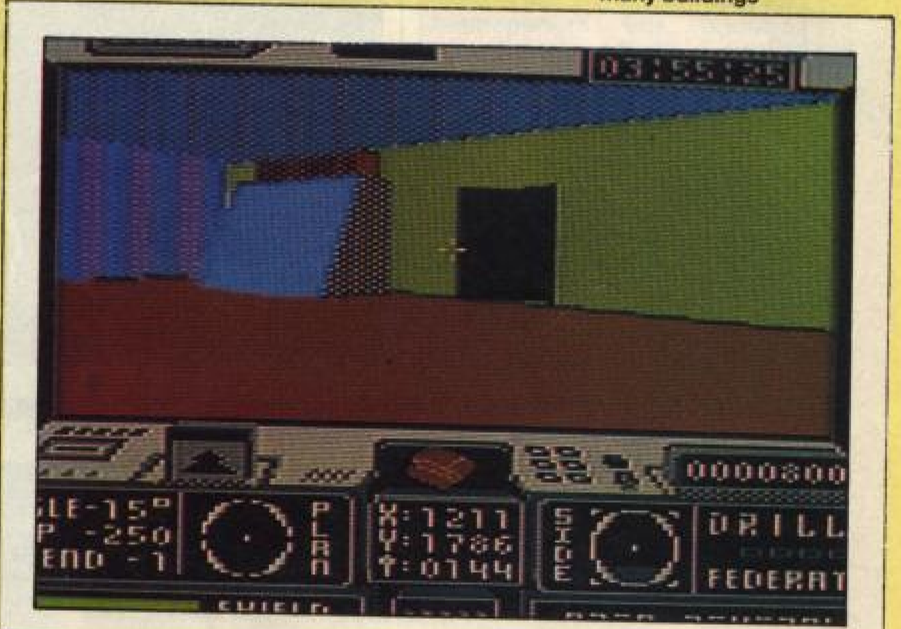
where in the sector. The jet is activated simply by docking the probe with its underside.

In the jet, the player is treated to an improved viewpoint and increased manoeuvrability: the jet goes up and down and flies above all but the tallest of Mitral's constructions. The craft can land at will, and hover. The jet's onboard lasers afford it some protection, the its limited shield strength makes it vulnerable to attack.

When a potential gas pocket is located, a drilling rig is teleported down to Mitral's surface and positioned. Once the rig has penetrated the gas pocket, a read-out indicates how much of the gas has been released. A result of 50% or more means that the sector is safe. Points are awarded for successful gas extractions, and you can call up information on the total amount of gas tapped and sectors secured.

To increase the pressure, Mitral is in the path of an approaching meteor, which threatens to collide with the volatile gas-filled moon, causing it to explode violently. The player has just four real time hours to complete his mission.

▼ **Approaching one of *Driller*'s many buildings**




A 32-page booklet explaining *Driller* and Freescape, plus a control summary card are provided in the packaging, and a cardboard model of Mitral is included for mapping purposes.

▶ **The interior of an energy storage hut**




**PRESENTATION 98%**
Good documentation, excellent packaging, a user-friendly control system, plus the thankful addition of a game save option.

**GRAPHICS 97%**
3D filled graphics, which are blocky, fairly rapid, but utterly convincing.

**SOUND 92%**
A haunting 15 minute soundtrack helps to boost an already enthralling atmosphere.

**HOOKABILITY 89%**
Initial urge is one of exploration – and the lure is strong.

**LASTABILITY 93%**
The 18 sectors are filled with logical but taxing puzzles, and should provide an enormous and entertaining on-going challenge.

**OVERALL 96%**
A unique 3D experience to be savoured at length.

# ZZAP! TEST

## BOBSLEIGH

**Digital Integration, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys**

Imagine travelling at 80 mph, four inches above a sheet of ice – that's the sport of bobsleigh.

The action starts with a management screen, which allows the team to be trained, a new bob purchased, new runners fitted, the racing venue changed, the current track examined, or a new season started. This screen also enables the player to keep track of his finances, which are boosted by sponsorship and depleted by accidents and the continual maintenance of the team and bob. Should the player go bankrupt, the game is over.

The course is viewed in 3D from a participant's viewpoint. At the start the joystick is waggled to push the bob, and fire pressed to jump in. The sled is steered left and right and avoids contact with the track walls to maximise speed.

At the finish, the driver's start is rated, and the total time and cost of repairs are displayed.

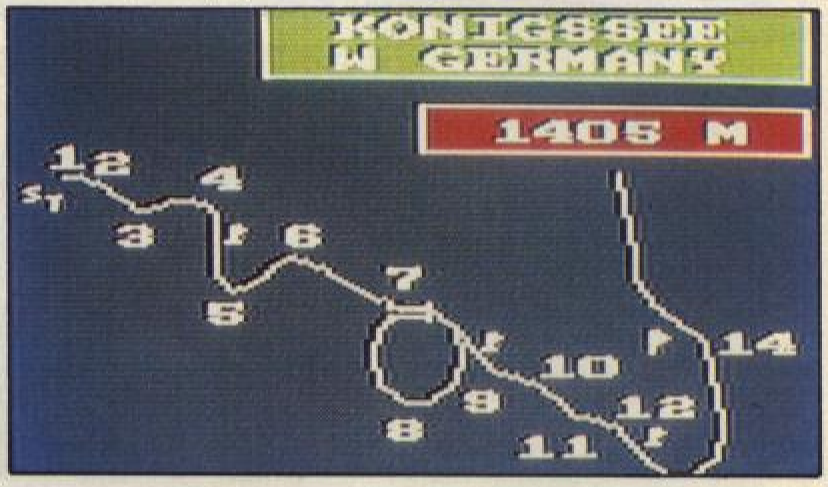



**Any computer 'simulation' relies on whether the graphics convey a sensation of actually participating in the event or experience.** Bobsleigh **never really gets over this hurdle, and since this represents its main objective, the superb options and management screens are therefore superfluous. The screen update is slow, and sometimes the vector movement becomes synchronised, so that the sled appears to be stationary or even moving backwards! There is some limited enjoyment to be gleaned from** Bobsleigh, **but it has stiff competition in the sports simulation range . . .**




**The first thing that strikes you are the naff graphics. The annoying thing is that the rest of the game is superb, with a huge array of options and an enjoyable management side – but as the action depends upon the racing scenes, it falls well below its potential. The sound is nothing special either. Given the potential that lies in such an exciting sport, this has got to be regarded as a missed opportunity.**

▶ **An aerial view of the *Bobsleigh* course showing what you're up against**




**PRESENTATION 88%**
Many options, and a very slick menu system.

**GRAPHICS 46%**
Terrible 3D that fails to create any feeling of speed.

**SOUND 48%**
Paltry sound, with some grotty Mozart and minimal racing effects.

**HOOKABILITY 53%**
Not very tempting, since racing is difficult to succeed at, and management can be baffling.

**LASTABILITY 46%**
It's very hard to progress, and the difficult gameplay is ultimately offputting.

**OVERALL 58%**
A missed opportunity for a spectacular sports simulation.

## TRACK AND FIELD

**Konami, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only.**

The classic Konami arcade game, *Track and Field*, at last arrives on the Commodore. There are six events: 100m sprint, long jump, javelin, 110m hurdles, hammer throw and high jump.

The first event requires the player to waggle the joystick from left to right. The faster the stick is waggled, the better the runner's performance. Both the long jump and javelin require similar tactics, but fire is pressed at the 'scratch' line to jump or release the javelin. The longer the button is depressed, the higher the jump or throw.

The hurdles is another waggler, with fire used to jump. The hammer is a test of timing, where the thrower spins and is stopped to send the hammer flying up the field. Finally, the high jump tests precision, and the player uses fire to guide the athlete safely over the jump.

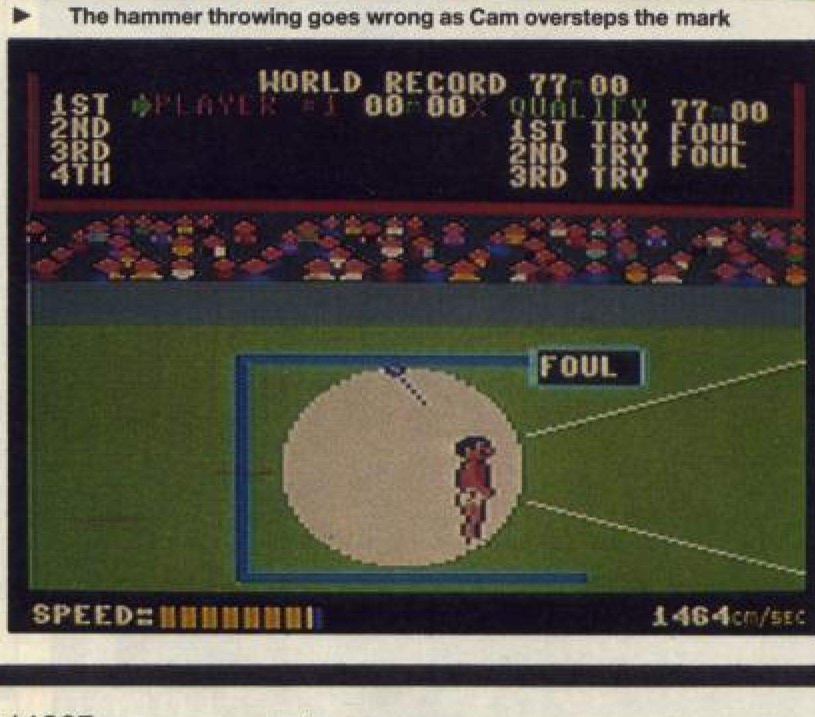






**It may be a little too easy to criticise Konami for this one, but they've certainly missed the boat with their 'official' version of** Track and Field. **It must be admitted that the game is enjoyable, but to be honest I'd much sooner spend money on Firebird's** Decathlon **or Americana's** Go For The Gold, **which both offer more events and variety for over five pounds less.**

▶ **The hammer throwing goes wrong as Cam oversteps the mark**







**I was a great fan of** Track and Field **when it hit the arcades a few years ago, and this extremely accurate conversion gave me plenty to reminisce about. The gameplay, like all wagglers, is highly enjoyable and provides a lot of fun. The big problem is the £9 price tag – it's much too high for an old game like this, especially as the far superior** Decathlon **is available for £7 less.**

**PRESENTATION 88%**
One to four player options, practice mode and level select.

**GRAPHICS 55%**
Fairly close to the arcade original, but comparatively poor by today's standards.

**SOUND 62%**
Again close to the original, with some reasonable jingles.

**HOOKABILITY 79%**
Still very addictive and playable, especially when two players participate.

**LASTABILITY 76%**
Although repetitive, it's the sort of game that always provides a laugh when played.

**OVERALL 61%**
Playable, but far, far too expensive for what's on offer.







DON'T MISS!...
5 ALL-ACTION COMPUTER HITS
LIVE AMMO
ARMY MOVES
You are a member of the SOC (Special Operations Corp) a crack regiment of Specialist Commandos picked for the most dangerous missions.
Locked in a safe at the emeny headquarters is information . . . information so vital that the turning point of the conflict depends upon its discovery. To get to the headquarters means crossing jungles and deserts, manipulating many forms of transportation and harnessing a variety of weapons systems.
Only the best will succeed on this deadly venture . . . Will you be one of them?
© Game Design Dinamic
RAMBO FIRST BLOOD PART II
The box-office smash converted for your home-micro that rocketed to the No. 1 spot is now offered to you in this amazing LIVE AMMO action pack. As Rambo you have a formidable array of weapons which you will need against an equally formidable enemy. Rescue your friends and escape by helicopter—if you get that far!
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GREEN BERET
RESCUE THE CAPTIVES!
You are the GREEN BERET, a highly trained combat machine. Your mission: infiltrate all four enemy Strategic Defense installations—you are alone against immeasurable odds, have you the skill and stamina to succeed? A slick conversion of the arcade favourite displaying all the play features of the original.
© Konami
TOP GUN
The "TOP GUN" game puts you in the pilot's seat of an F-14 jet fighter. 3-D vector graphics and split screen display allow one or two players to combat head to head or against the computer. Your armaments in this nerve-tingling aerial duel are heat seeking missiles and 20mm rapid fire cannon. Many skills have to be brought in to play such as reflexes, manoeuvring ability and accuracy to become the best of the best. "Top Gun" mavericks enter the danger zone!
TOP GUN TM & © 1986, 1987 Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved
THE GREAT ESCAPE
The year is 1942, the place Germany. War has broken out and you have been captured and placed in a high security P.O.W. camp. Victory may be far away, so it is your duty to escape, but this will not be easy. It will take careful planning and much patience, culminating in a skilful and resourceful implementation. In the camp you are closely guarded but while you follow the daily routine you will need to slip away unnoticed to reconnoitre the situation and collect tools and materials necessary for your chosen escape route. There are many avenues of escape, some difficult, all certainly dangerous and each one requiring different skills or equipment.
Game Design Copyright Denton Designs 1986
Screen shots taken from various computer formats
LIVE AMMO
ocean
5 ALL-ACTION COMPUTER HITS
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You're cool, the engine's hot, the girl's gorgeous,
a tank full of gas and an open road.... the rest is up to you..!
Screenshot from Amstrad version.
Out Run™
Screenshot from CBM 64/128 version.
STAGE 3
START
Screenshot from Spectrum version.
Screenshot from Atari ST version.
STAGE 4
JPQ


The ultimate experience in motor sports simulation, the absolute challenge to nerve and reflexes. Feel the wind in your hair and the pull of the G-force as you power your way along the highways and byeways, a girl by your side, and open country before you. Experience the exhilaration and excitement of driving a high performance sports car in this teasing time trial where your co-ordination and nerve will be tested to unbelievable limits. Out Run the coin op starred as an arcade sensation. Out Run the computer simulation mirrors this exciting all action spectacle.
CBM 64/128
CASSETTE £9.99 DISK £11.99
SPECTRUM
CASSETTE £8.99
AMSTRAD
CASSETTE £9.99 DISK £14.99
ATARI ST
DISK £19.99
INCLUDES ORIGINAL 'Sound Track' FROM COIN OP VERSION
The machine becomes a home computer reality on December 10th.*
*Atari ST version will be available later in December.
SEGA®
U.S. GOLD
All American Software
U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 356 3388.

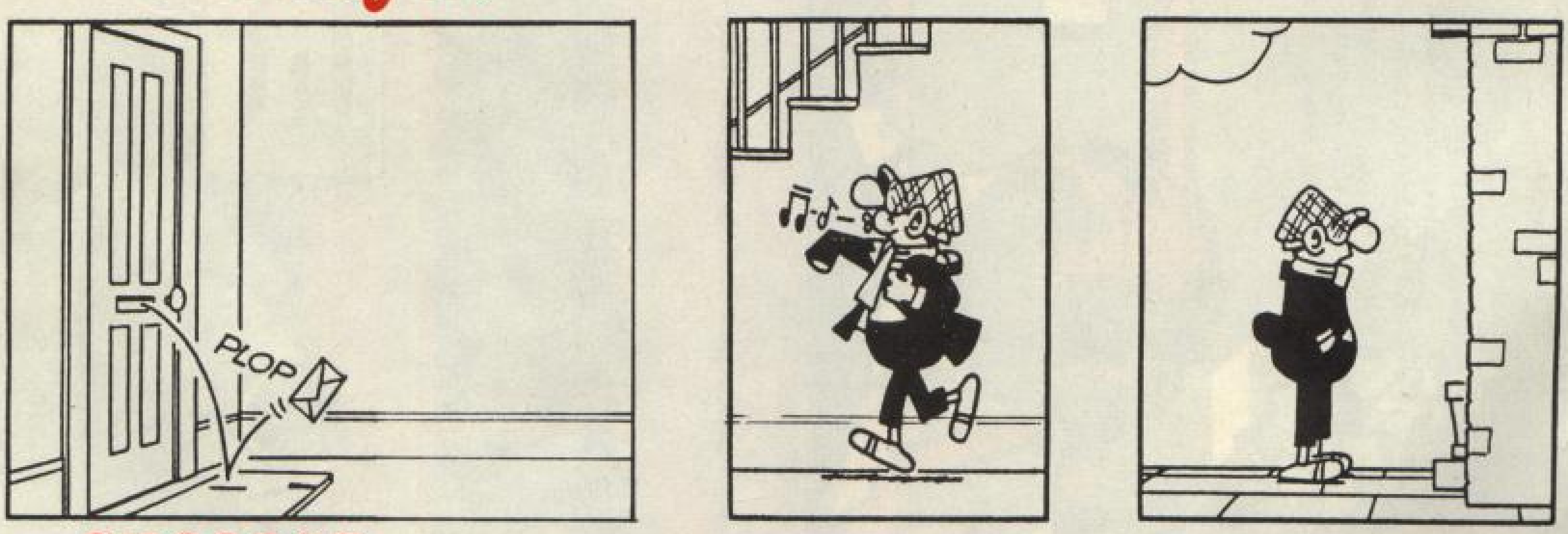
# Late one evening...



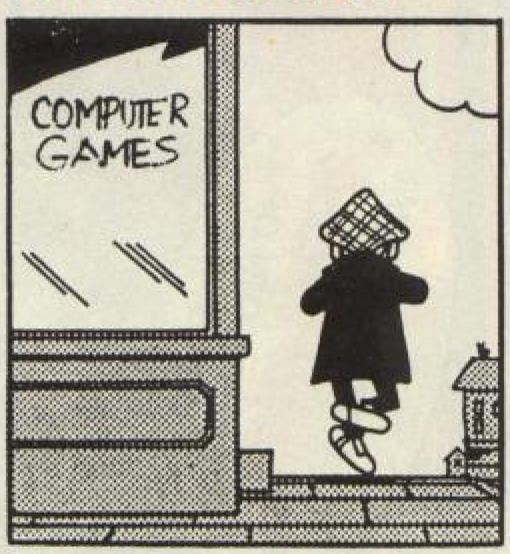

# ...even later




# ...next day...




# ...success




# ANDY CAPP

## Out for Christmas on




Spectrum, Commodore, Amstrad
From good software shops everywhere



Cartoons by Reg Smythe

**NB: DISK VERSION ONLY. A CASSETTE VERSION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AND WILL BE RATED SEPARATELY WHEN RELEASED.**



# SUPERSTAR ICE HOCKEY

**Databyte, £14.95 disk, joystick only**

As an alternative to mainstream sports simulations, Databyte have created a computer version of ice hockey.

Extensive playing options include single or two player practice sessions, and league matches where the player attempts to guide his team through four divisions, ultimately entering the finals for the league trophy.

League play revolves around competition matches. On starting a game, further options are selected to alter the team's strip and the length of a match, and also to nominate computer or human control of the goalie, coach and centre – the main player.

The horizontally scrolling playfield is viewed in forced perspective from the side. Play follows normal ice hockey rules, and includes offsides and penalties. If the player commits a foul upon a member of the opposition, he spends 30 seconds in the sin bin.

Outside the rink, the player may also act as coach and manager, using the joystick-controlled menus to take time-outs, select offensive or defensive team tactics, and substitute players when they become exhausted. Between matches, he trains the team, recruits new players, and trades existing ones with other teams.

The ultimate target, over nine seasons of competition, is to qualify for the cup competition by finishing high in the division, and progress as far as possible in the play-offs, to hopefully finish in the final.




**At first glance,** Ice Hockey **doesn't look particularly impressive, with poorly drawn sprites skating around a stark backdrop. However, appearances can be deceptive – and this is the case here. The gameplay is absolutely superb, and fully captures the frenetic qualities of an ice hockey match. Controlling one player all the time really gets you into the team spirit, especially as the computer players are prepared to pass the puck around and set up moves. Hacking and slicing other players furthers the enjoyment, although too much violence can end up with your player sitting in the 'sin bin' for 30 seconds to cool off. As well as the fun side, there's also the managerial aspect, which adds depth and makes the simulation that much more rewarding. Definitely recommended to sports fans.**




**Ice hockey is certainly one of the more unusual sports to simulate, but Databyte have done a polished and very entertaining job nonetheless. The range of options is commendable, and the game itself is well presented, with neat characters and convincing gameplay. It's unusual in that rather than attempting to switch control from one character to the other, the player controls just one character, with the remaining team members having some semblance of 'intelligence'. The attempted realism is also quite noteworthy – as the game progresses, the players become tired and don't move as fast! Suffice to say,** Superstar Ice Hockey **is one of the best team sports simulations to appear since** International Soccer.




**Initially, I was concerned by the daunting manual that accompanies this game – by building an accurate replica of the hockey world, Databyte have had to explain all the options available in considerable depth. They've coped extremely well, and with a menu-driven management system, have made the game surprisingly easy to play. The action is engrossing at all levels, and the managing/coaching aspect has been thoughtfully designed, so that it doesn't complicate or dullen the overall feel – in fact, it actually enhances it. I can recommend** Superstar Ice Hockey **as one of the few good sports simulations around.**

► ***Ice Hockey* has plenty of depth and convincing gameplay, both on and off the rink**




► **You can almost hear the swish of metal on ice and the clunk of stick against head**




**PRESENTATION 87%**
Impressive options, clear instructions and easy-to-use menus. The continual disk access is necessary, but frustrating.

**GRAPHICS 62%**
Small, but neatly animated players add to the convincing look.

**SOUND 28%**
Simple spot effects during matches.

**HOOKABILITY 83%**
Once you've mastered the technique of player control, matches soon become highly competitive.

**LASTABILITY 79%**
Each match is entertaining, and the ever-present challenge of winning the cup provides a continual urge to play.

**OVERALL 85%**
An extensive and enjoyable simulation, managing to emulate an unusual sport with style.

**ZZAP! TEST**

# JACK THE NIPPER II – IN COCONUT CAPERS

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys**




More tropical naughtiness with Britain's baddest nipper

Following his previous activities, Jack the Nipper, Britain's most notorious under-five, has been ordered out of Britain, and put onboard a 'plane bound for Australia. Jack had other plans, however, and made a daring escape from his deportees, parachuting into to the relative safety of the African jungle.

Free once again to wreak havoc, Jack explores the depths of this tropical landscape, aiming to be as naughty as possible.

The single player takes control of the hyperactive kiddy, and directs him from screen to screen, collecting objects along the way. Progress is hampered by the natural hazards of the jungle such as boulders and swamps which are jumped over, trees that require climbing and chasms and pits which are swung across, using hanging vines.

Jack has two pockets in his nappy, one holds weapons and the other, naughty objects. Weapons allow Jack to defend himself from the indigenous wildlife and natives of the jungle. Weapons include blowpipes, dynamite, and coconuts – all of which are exhaustible.

Naughty objects are collected for use in Jack's nefarious activities on later screens. Taking the correct item to the corresponding location is rewarded by naughtiness points, as displayed on the naughtyometer. These objects include honey, grease, woodworms, logs and even an onion. Only one item may be carried at a time, though, so Jack's route through the jungle is somewhat convoluted.

Whenever a naughty object is obtained, a musical jingle signals its collection and also offers a clue to its identity: 'Summer Nights' is played whenever the tin of grease




**Just when you thought it was safe to go back to your computer, Gremlin have again unleashed the greatest threat to civilized society, the only child to make the SAS look like a teddy bears' tea party, yep Jack is alive and well and causing complete havoc in the jungle. Graphically the game isn't much cop, small blobby sprites trundle around a fairly decent background; sound is little better with a harmless tune on the intro screen and some nice jingles throughout the game. Despite the moans, though, I found myself instantly drawn into the game, some of the puzzles are really devious and it will take many plays to solve.**




**It's quite obvious that the** Future Knight **designers are the brains behind the latest** Nipper **adventure – they look and play very similarly indeed. However, the authors have taken the best points of their previous effort and added some new tweaks in the gameplay to come up with an entertaining, if rather tricky arcade adventure. The graphical style is neat, with lovely use of colour, and excellent sprite and background detail. The instructions are very vague, but the puzzles have been nicely thought out, and if you still have problems, there's always the clue sheet to send off for. If you're into arcade adventures,** Nipper II **should prove worthwhile.**

# MASK

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk, joystick only.**

Having travelled the toy world and comic strip, *MASK* joins the growing number of conversions in the software market, courtesy of Gremlin Graphics.

In this specially designed scenario, the MASK headquarters at Boulder Hill has been ambushed by the evil forces of VENOM. All but one of MASK's agents have been thrown into a time vortex, sending them to other areas of time and space. The player takes the role of Matt Trakker, the surviving MASK agent, in his quest to rescue all seven of his comrades from the four different time/space zones.

Matt undertakes the mission in his Thunder Hawk vehicle, a gull-winged car which flies over small obstacles and fires bullets. This is displayed on a multi-directionally scrolling screen which also shows the assorted beings who continually attempt to harm the chronologically displaced MASK agents. These range from dinosaurs and giant turtles in the prehistoric zone to UFOs in the far future.

To complete a level, Matt finds the stranded agents and their MASKS – the source of their pow-




**Ignoring any connections with toys or TV shows,** MASK **as a game provides quite a decent challenge, and is surprisingly entertaining. Admittedly, the game's theme is fairly simple, but it still managed to keep me enthralled for some time. The mixture of blasting, exploring and collecting puzzle pieces is captivating, and the gameplay is varied enough to actually justify its pursuance – something that can hardly be said of many of the recent tie-ins. Control of Matt's car is quite convincing as it careers around the screen, although this can make parts of the landscape a little difficult to negotiate. Otherwise, the whole game feels fairly polished and can be considered a moderately worthy purchase.**

Matt Trakker resists the aerial onslaught of an enemy helicopter in his Thunderhawk car



is picked up!

The ultimate destination of the item is not revealed directly but is determined through play and is linked with the eventual recipient.

Cat-like, Jack begins the game with nine lives which may be lost the jungle's inhabitants, or by falling a long distance. His antics continue until all his lives are gone or until Jack has achieved maximum naughtiness to complete the game.




**Although not entirely my cup of tea, there is something terribly addictive about *Jack the Nipper II*. Unlike Gremlin's *Monty Mole* games, *Jack The Nipper* is a lot more polished and the whole hangs together better. The control is quite precise and definite, Jack goes more or less where you tell him to, which is good since then you only have yourself to blame when you mess up. The smart graphics provide a decent atmosphere and the puzzles are logical and challenging, rather than obscure and difficult. The game's humour is suitably infantile but enjoyable nonetheless, and this platform adventure should keep most people happy for some weeks.**

**PRESENTATION 57%**
The usual array of options but instructions are a mite lacking.

**GRAPHICS 66%**
The small sprites are neatly drawn and coloured, and well animated against atmospheric backdrops.

**SOUND 55%**
After the irritating main title theme from 'Hatari', the jungle drum soundtrack provides a suitable ambience and the jingle clues are humorous and effective.

**HOOKABILITY 78%**
The comfortable control and straightforward objective make it dead easy to pick up and play.

**LASTABILITY 73%**
Loads of screens to explore and map and the game provides a strong enough lure to do so.

**OVERALL 72%**
Fans of *Jack The Nipper*, mappers and explorers alike should enjoy Jack's latest tropical antics.

ers. In order to do this, he follows a specific pattern for each agent: first, locate a scanner and the four pieces of security key necessary to operate it, and second: use the working scanner to lead him to the otherwise hidden agent who can then be picked up. The agent's MASK container is now collected, allowing Matt to drive back to the time vortex for transportation to the next time zone, which is loaded separately.

Once Matt has reformed the entire MASK team, he leads an attack on the VENOM base, the destruction of which finally enables the MASK agents to return home.




**Gremlin have decided to jump on the tie-in bandwagon, but thankfully,** MASK **isn't *too* bad a game. It's playable, and as it's quite hard to die, you can enjoy yourself zooming round the levels, blasting and collecting. The graphics aren't outstanding, but there are no serious flaws, and the sound is inoffensive. The annoyance with** MASK**, and so many of the toy conversions recently, is that there has been little effort to make the game anything but average. This is the over-familiar eight-way scrolling format, with nothing original to commend it. The game's producers are relying on the appeal of the toys and/or comics to ensure large sales amongst the younger market. A long time ago,** Zoids **proved that toy tie-ins can be original and entertaining, but it seems that nobody remembers that now.**

**PRESENTATION 64%**
The overly brief instructions includes a short MASK cartoon strip. Informative screen display during play.

**GRAPHICS 66%**
Mediocre sprites, but fairly impressive scrolling and scenery.

**SOUND 56%**
Poor spot effects and reasonable tune.

**HOOKABILITY 69%**
The first level is easily completable, which provides a strong enough lure to attempt the others.

**LASTABILITY 63%**
If you can stick with the gameplay, there are four tricky levels to overcome.

**OVERALL 63%**
An average toy conversion, with just enough gameplay to make it worthwhile.

# THUNDERCHOPPER

**Action Soft, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys**

The latest helicopter simulation to hit the 64 is *Thunderchopper*, based around the Hughes 530 MG Defender.

There are five missions to tackle, which involve the destruction of enemy forces, the rescue of stranded pilots and the escort of troops. The would-be pilot starts from a home base, and returns at any time to refuel and re-arm.

The helicopter's status is displayed on the control panel, with indicators showing altitude, rate of climb, horizontal speed, and fuel remaining. During flight, the pilot's destination is given as a three digit heading, which is tracked by an Automatic Direction Finder (ADF).

When a mission ends, the player is given a rating in accordance to how much ammunition has been used in destroying targets, how quickly men were rescued, and how much damage the helicopter sustained in the process.




**First impressions are favourable, with extremely fast and effective filled-in 3D graphics giving a convincing feeling of flight. The action is very absorbing, but I never felt any feeling of urgency or excitement during play – something which is very evident in** Gunship**. The five missions are quite diverse, and those who enjoy a precise and involved simulation should find** Thunderchopper **very entertaining. Personally I'd go for** Gunship **or** Chuck Yeager's AFT **– they both offer far more depth and excitement.**




**This is an impressive first release from first-timers Action Soft (in this country at least). The action is smooth and realistic, especially when using a C128 – the program uses the 128's fast chip to good effect, and the five minute 64 demo only takes three minutes in 128 mode! The graphics are very effective and compare favourably to the likes of** Gunship**. Unfortunately, there are only five missions which, once completed, might not provide any further interest. Still,** Thunderchopper **is a good combat game and a convincing flight simulator nonetheless.**

**NB: DISK VERSION ONLY.**
**A CASSETTE VERSION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AND WILL BE RATED SEPARATELY WHEN RELEASED.**

**PRESENTATION 88%**
Superb packaging and many useful options.

**GRAPHICS 82%**
Fast, solid, 3D graphics, only let down by the poor detail on individual objects.

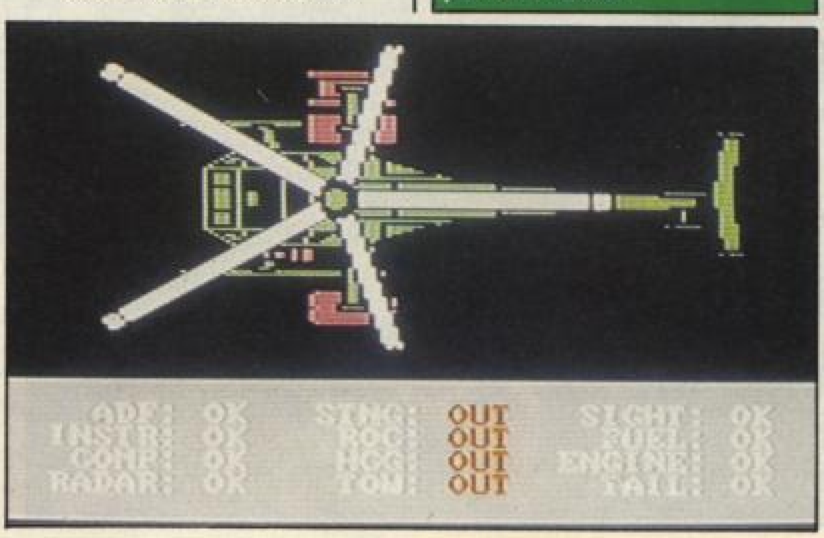
**SOUND 55%**
The constant whine of the engine and some simple spot effects.

**HOOKABILITY 80%**
Surprisingly easy to get into.

**LASTABILITY 82%**
Five different missions, each with three difficulty levels provide a substantial challenge.

**OVERALL 83%**
A polished, technically impressive flight simulator. Perhaps not as ostentatious as others, but just as effective.

▶ **A plan view of your flying steed – the Thunderchopper**



# WESTERN GAMES

**Ariolasoft, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick or keys**

Howdy Pardners! Gettin' tired of all them athletic sports simulations? Then try Ariolasoft's new multi-event simulation of old wild Western pastimes.

Having selected a one or two player game, the first event to be attempted is arm wrestling, where the player sits opposite his adversary, hand-in-hand. Arm strength is built up by pulling back on the joystick in time to a rhythmically pulsing 'muscle meter'. The winner is the person who forces the other's hand down onto the table, in a best-of-five contest.

The next event is beer-shooting, where both contestants stand side by side and, on the signal, draw their pistols to fire at beer glasses. The faster shot scores a point, and the glasses are changed to a smaller variety. If one player manages to hit five targets in succession, he wins. Should the other interrupt his run, they both start from scratch.

The third 'event' is dancing – a pastime requiring the player to follow a highly complex pattern of joystick movements in time to a quickening piano player's tempo. Failing to keep up obliges the player to buy the pianist a drink, effectively losing him the event.

Quid-spitting is the next pastime to be endured. The participants face each other with a spittoon in front of them. Both men bite off lumps of chewing tobacco, masticate them, by waggling the joystick, and attempt to spit them into the opposition's pot by altering the angle of projection.

The next task is milking a cow, where the player extracts a pint of milk as quickly as possible. The process of milking requires a sequence of eight joystick commands to be followed in rhythm to the udder movements. The slower milker loses.

Finally, the player sits down to eat, with the aim of finishing a bowl of stew before his opponent. Every step of the process is controlled, including handling the spoon, eating and swallowing.






**After seeing the colourful and nicely detailed graphics, I thought that it was time for another multi-event treat. Unfortunately my enthusiasm was short lived. Although** Western Games **boasts some unusual and original ideas, the over-complex control methods used make the game a chore to play, rather than fun. A challenging game is one thing, but when you're spending the whole time trying to move the joystick and press the fire button in a sequence that bears no resemblance to the on-screen action, it gets a little tiresome and frustrating. If you're prepared to practice, I should think** Western Games **could provide fun – but I wouldn't put it top of my shopping list.**




**I can't help feeling that too much time was spent making this game 'cutesy', and not enough on refining the gameplay. Some of the events, such as cow-milking, are ludicrously pedantic and require an exact rhythm to be maintained for several minutes – which just isn't fun. The feeling is not one of controlling your character, but simply following a predefined game pattern. In other areas, the game is simply average, with adequate sound and a few frames of animation in each scene. I think the reason you don't see many games based around this kind of action is because it's difficult to make anything like this entertaining – and programmers Magic Bytes haven't managed either.**

▶ **What? A computer simulation of milking a cow??**







▶ **More computer silliness takes place on the stage of an old western saloon**




**I guess that programmers are starting to run out of ideas for sport simulations, since the competitive aspect of** Western Games **is tenuous to say the least. The events are wonderfully presented, with some brilliant graphics and animation, but unfortunately the gameplay is lacking due to the rather odd control systems. The complex series of commands needed to initiate the simplest of operations tends to be offputting, and often lacks positive results. This shouldn't really present a hurdle for most games players, but if you're easily inclined to frustration, steer clear.**

**PRESENTATION 75%**
Generally adequate, but marred by the apparent lack of a quit option.

**GRAPHICS 88%**
Superb cartoon quality graphics, with plenty of subliminal animation to enhance the overall effect.

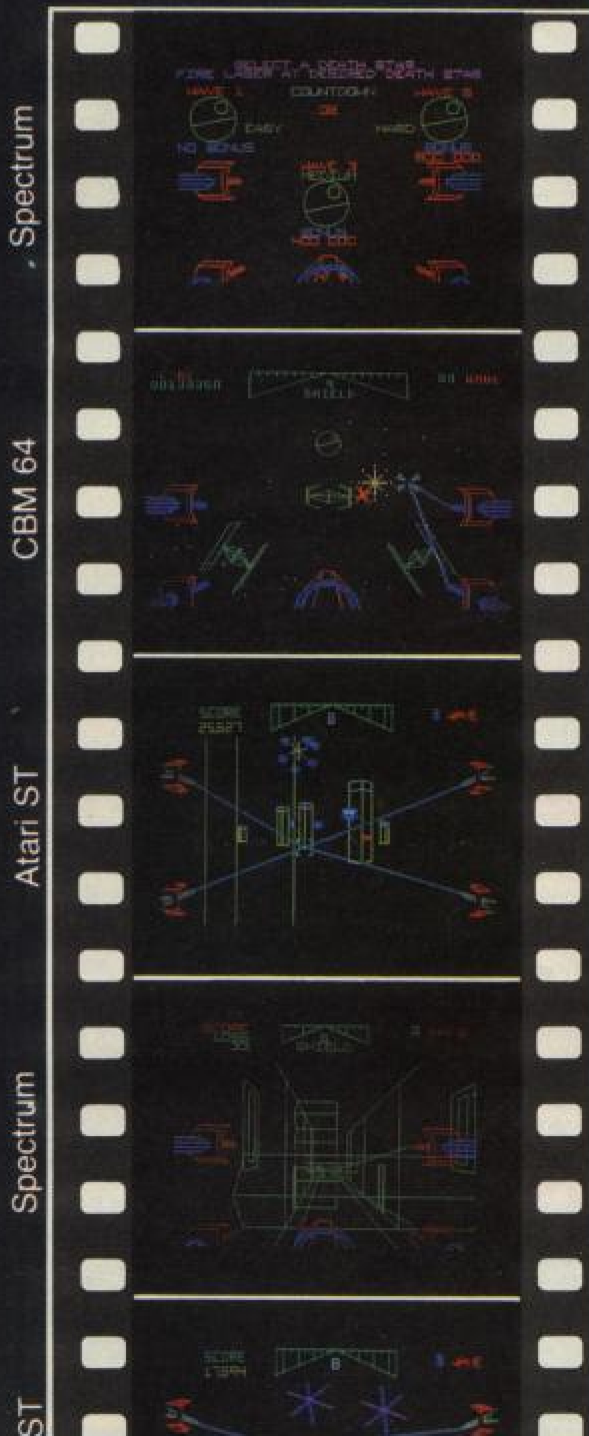
**SOUND 67%**
Some decent spot effects and suitably Western music.

**HOOKABILITY 53%**
Overly complex control methods must first be familiarised before any progress is made.

**LASTABILITY 61%**
The six events should present a decent, albeit frustrating, challenge.

## OVERALL 68%
An unusual and sometimes over-complicated multi-event game with limited appeal.

# STAR




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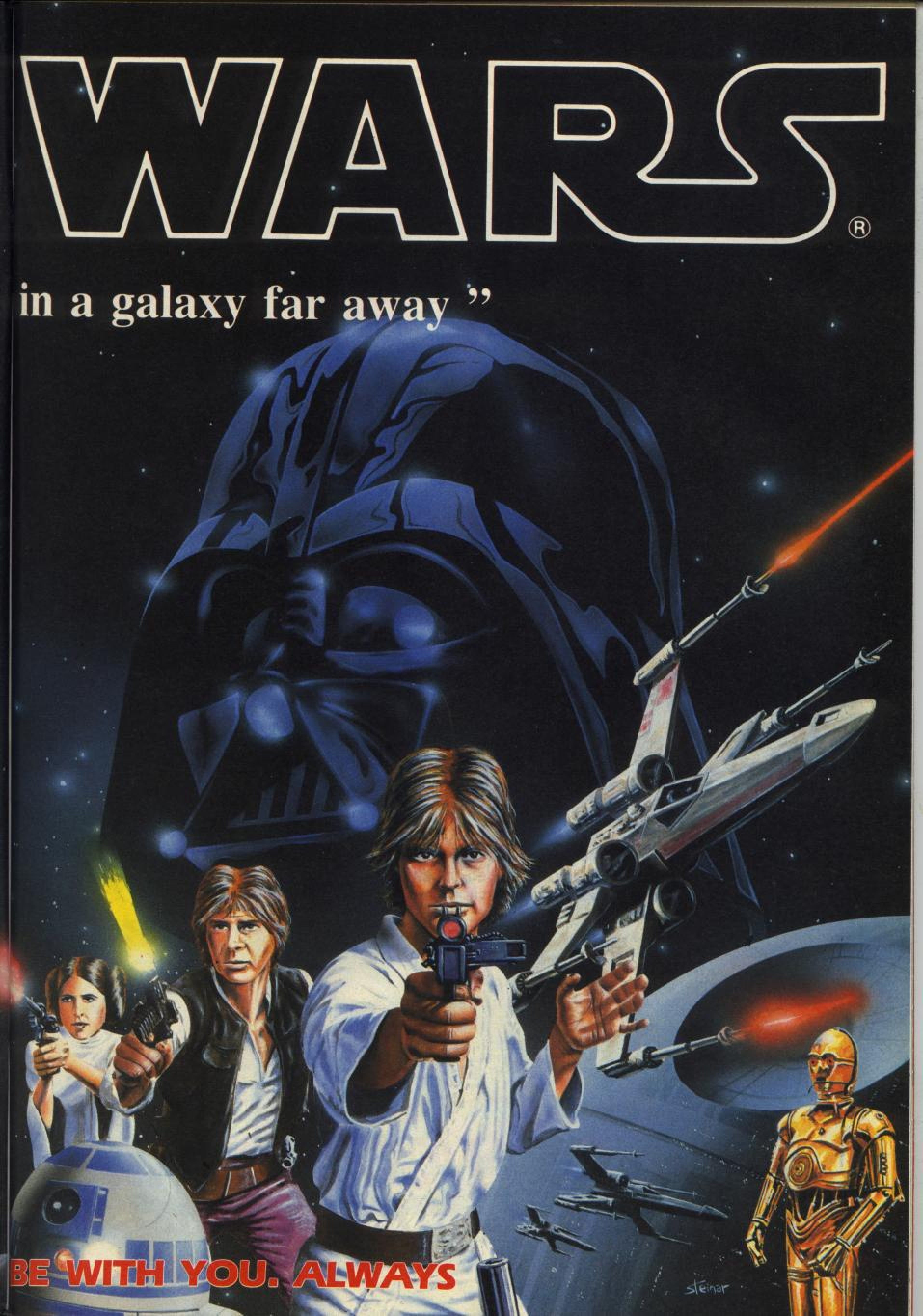
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# PHM PEGASUS

**Electronic Arts, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys**

Lucasfilms' latest offering allows the player to take command of a Boeing Marine Systems' Patrol Hydrofoil Missile Craft over eight different scenarios.

The main screen shows a view from the hydrofoil's bridge, with a radar screen, direction indicator, speed, fuel and damage meters, and weapons display beneath.

Whenever a signal is detected by radar, the targetting computer is initiated and a binocular view of the opposing vessel appears above the main viewscreen. If there are many ships within targetting range, successive key presses cycles through the available targets.

The hydrofoil supports a fierce armoury, including 76mm cannon, Harpoon, Gabriel and Exocet missiles, plus chaff rockets to confuse attacking missiles. The available weaponry is toggled via the function keys and only becomes effective once the targetting computer is activated.

Each of the eight assignments are loaded separately, and their aim and survival tactics are outlined in the accompanying manual. Once the vessel and its workings have been familiarised on the training missions, one of the assignments is undertaken. A specific goal is achieved within a time limit, and includes such diverse events as tracking down terrorist craft, travelling through a sensitive war zone and providing support to a convoy.

An Operations Map is accessed and displays an overhead view of the present locale, and the relative positions of the hydrofoil, plus patrol helicopters and a convoy on later missions. A time compression function is included to speed up the gameplay up to 128 times normal speed.




► Battle stations, with an enemy ship in your sights and the 76mm gun wound up and ready to play . . .




► The operations map from *PHM Pegasus*, showing the hydrofoil's current location



**Lucasfilms' latest is reminiscent of Epyx'** Destroyer, **insofar that it looks very complicated, but is in fact very straightforward to play. The graphics are quite convincing, and the action is fast enough to keep the player occupied. The big problem is the rather repetitive nature of the gameplay. Although the separate missions offer plenty of long-term challenge, they're all ultimately similar and may become boring when a few have been completed.** PHM Pegasus **is enjoyable, but is only recommended to hardcore action simulation fans.**



**I was quite surprised to find** PHM Pegasus **is nothing more than a fast moving shoot 'em up. The player targets an opponent, chooses a method of blowing him up, and moves onto the next opponent. As this is just about all the action amounts too, other than hurling chaff at incoming missiles, I found the play became repetitive and somewhat boring far too quickly. On the technical side, the graphics are not incredibly sharp, but fairly effective, while the sound is all effects, and none too good at that.** PHM Pegasus **isn't a bad package if you like naval combat, but as a game in its own right, it's not that hot.**



**The Lucasfilm logo is usually one to watch out for, and while this isn't as innovative as their previous releases, it certainly has a professional and polished feel to it. Tracking and blasting enemy ships in the practice modes is good fun, but when playing out a scenario you often find yourself speeding along with little to do. The time compression makes up for this to a large degree, but this 'realistic' aspect is slightly annoying. I'm not sure how long *PHM Pegasus* will hold the attention, but it's certainly immediately enjoyable and worth purchasing if you have half an interest in combat simulations of this type.**

**PRESENTATION 88%**
Contains a demo, pause mode, good documentation and a summary of the available controls.

**GRAPHICS 63%**
Simple, but adequate.

**SOUND 37%**
Weak title tune, whining engine sound, and minimal spot effects.

**HOOKABILITY 72%**
Once the controls are mastered, the ordered chaos of battle proves stimulating and genuinely exciting.

**LASTABILITY 57%**
The different scenarios provide a decent – if possibly short-lived – challenge.

**OVERALL 71%**
An enjoyable, although occasionally sporadic, strategy shoot-'em-up.

# ZZAP! TEST

## OCTAPOLIS

**English Software, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys**

By 3987 AD the whole Galaxy has come under the domination of a mighty Imperium. Solar systems and entire races have fallen under its power, except for one planet – Octapolis. The



**This comes as a pleasant surprise, since *Octapolis* has had little publicity up until now, and is an extremely high quality production. Although some may think it is the ghost of *Sanxion* past come back to haunt the games world, the shoot 'em up section has far more advanced gameplay, and actually uses the extra viewing angle to good effect. This is not to diminish the role of the platform sequence, which is very sharp, and brings back distant memories of *Impossible Mission* in its graphic style. The only niggle is that the gameplay doesn't vary enough to maintain interest for long. Still, platform and shoot 'em up addicts should both find *Octapolis* very appealing.**



**Although *Octapolis* is a combination of two unoriginal ideas, the gameplay is slick and frantic enough to make it thoroughly enjoyable. The blasting part is very much like a two-way scrolling *Sanxion*, but is very fast and has a great control method. The split screen idea is novel, but I found myself just using the top one, rather than both. The second section equally entertaining, and the going gets pretty tough when the spaceman is guided around a crowded screen. Later levels become particularly devious, and quick thoughts and reflex actions are required to succeed. *Octapolis* is fast and furious, and offers enough to keep an arcade addict amused for quite some time. The action may become a little tedious once all eight levels have been conquered, but by then I think it would have given more than its fare share of entertainment.**

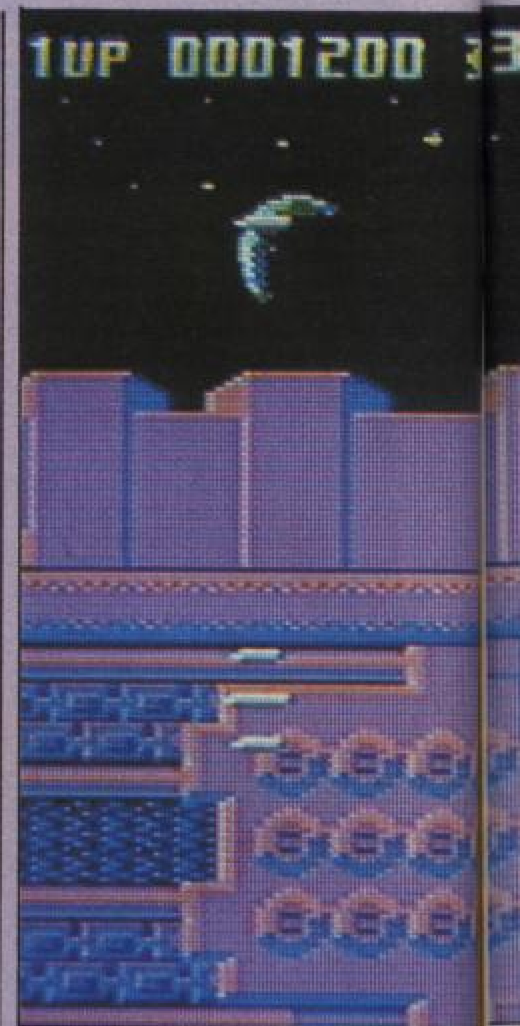


**This should appeal to fans of both platform games and shoot 'em ups, having a good slice of action from both genres. Both interior and exterior graphics are excellent (note the three-level parallax on the shooting sections) and the whole package looks very smooth and polished. Thankfully, the gameplay also profits from a good dose of attention, being addictive and playable. The presentation is very high, with little touches that make it comfortable, such as the fact that you can move the ship forward and still fire backwards at the same time. Overall control of the ship is quite tricky, and the dual viewpoints stretch the reactions and concentration to new limits. For me, the addictive interior sections slightly outshine the blasting parts, but both hang together well and make up one very entertaining game.**

inhabitants guard their eight cities with the most deadly of all secret weapons – telekinetic power. In the planet's vicinity, perfectly trained pilots become fumbling idiots, and the fastest, most powerful computers blow a fuse.

After centuries of searching, the Imperium has finally found a man immune to the ill-effects generated, and intends to use him to infiltrate the eight complexes.

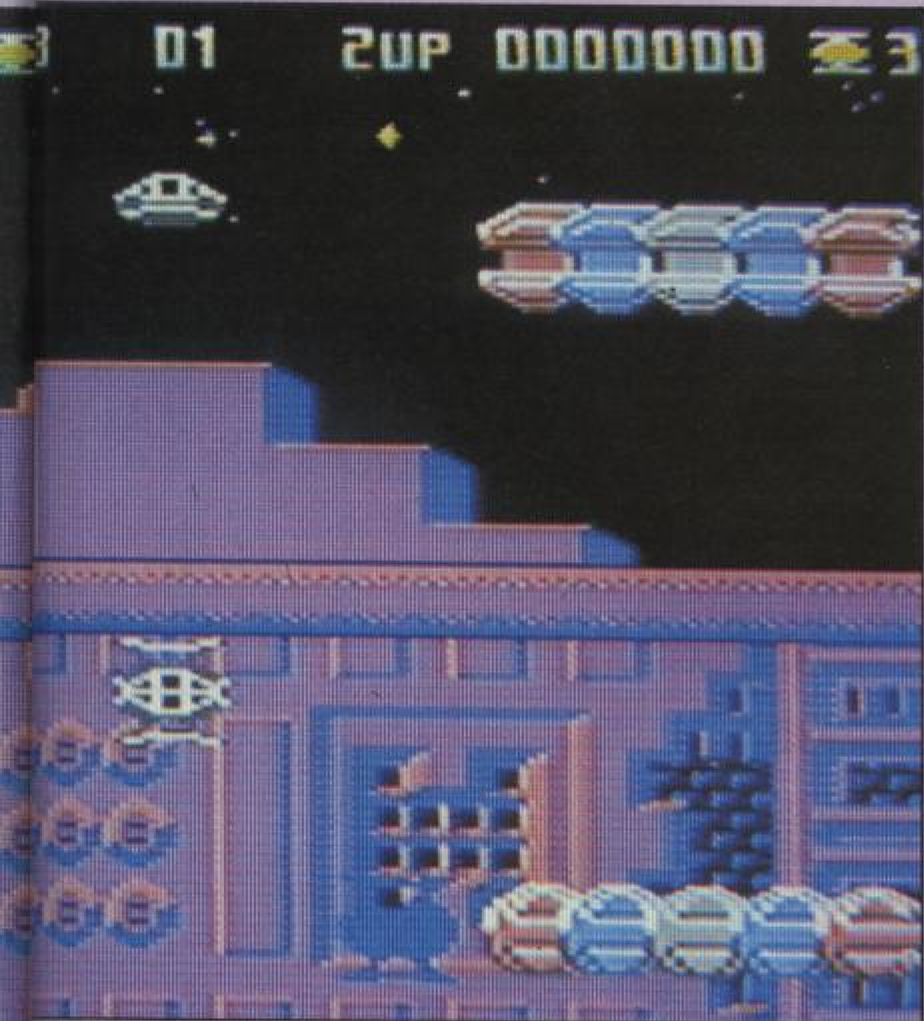
The mission is split into two sections: the first part is a shoot 'em up in which a split screen display shows the player's ship from viewpoints both above and to the side. Waves of alien ships attack from either side and are blasted to ensure survival. When a predetermined time limit has elapsed, or twenty aliens are destroyed, a signal sounds and the player is able to land the ship on a runway in the middle of the city, and enters the




► **Blasting a path to the platform section**






second section: a sequence of five platform screens.

Each room is populated by flying eyes, which are shot, and a variety of indestructible deadly monsters. The player attempts to leave the room through the exit positioned on the opposite side of the screen, thus entering the next room. Should the fifth exit be reached, the player is awarded the remaining value of a constantly decreasing timer, and goes forward to tackle the next city.

When the eighth city is conquered, the defences are deactivated, and the Imperium is able to successfully invade.

► *Octapolis* boasts some beautiful bas-relief backdrops

► Split screen shooting action in *Octapolis*




**PRESENTATION 78%**
Good all-round presentation, and useful options.

**GRAPHICS 90%**
Very smooth scrolling graphics, with effective parallax and sharp definition.

**SOUND 71%**
A high quality but bland soundtrack plays throughout, replaced by sound effects in the shoot 'em up sections.

**HOOKABILITY 87%**
The shoot 'em up takes some getting used to, but once achieved is great fun. The platform sections are straightforward enough and appeal immediately.

**LASTABILITY 80%**
The action is a touch repetitive, but is challenging enough to keep the player happy for quite some time.

**OVERALL 86%**
A highly polished and competent arcade blaster, intelligently combined with a challenging platform game.

# MADBALLS

**Ocean, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only**

On a series of suspended platforms high above the planet Orb, politics have gone crazy. The group that forms parliament is a gang of notorious Madballs, but they're without a leader. The player takes the role of Dust Brain, who has decided to fill the vacancy.




**This is a strange licence to obtain for a computer game – and frankly it doesn't work. The main characters could be** anything, **but we know they're Madballs because it tells us so on the title screen. A really annoying aspect is the apparent ease with which all of the other Madballs can happily bounce around on thin air without fear of falling, but as soon as the hero character gets near the edge, he falls off. After the first few minutes, the initial attraction disappears completely and you're left with a boring game and an annoying soundtrack.**

Dust Brain convinces the other Madballs by smashing them off the multi-directionally scrolling platforms. A 'persuaded' ball appears in a tube at the bottom of the screen, and if the eventual goal of persuading all eight madballs is achieved, the tube is full. However, if the ball currently in play falls off a platform, another from the tube takes its place.

There's one madball per level,




**Here's another in the now infamous line of toy conversions, albeit a less wholesome one than usual. The game has very little of the subject matter's character, and is more-or-less a** Bounder **imitation. Personally, I don't like the feel of the action, as the control is a bit vague, and other than bouncing off objects and into other balls, there's not a lot to do. The tune that runs during the game is repetitive – and therefore suits the action . . .**

and when it has been collected the 'downtube' exit is found to the next level.

**PRESENTATION 67%**
Smart appearance, but few useful options.

**GRAPHICS 61%**
Bland backdrops and the sprites lack definition.

**SOUND 61%**
The jaunty tune becomes annoying after a surprisingly short time.

**HOOKABILITY 53%**
Although not difficult to play, the lack of action is less than appealing.

**LASTABILITY 39%**
The unrewarding and repetitive gameplay soon bores.

**OVERALL 40%**
An uninspired and unappealing toy conversion.

► On the planet Orb, life has plenty of ups and downs . . .



# ZZAP! TEST

# TETRIS

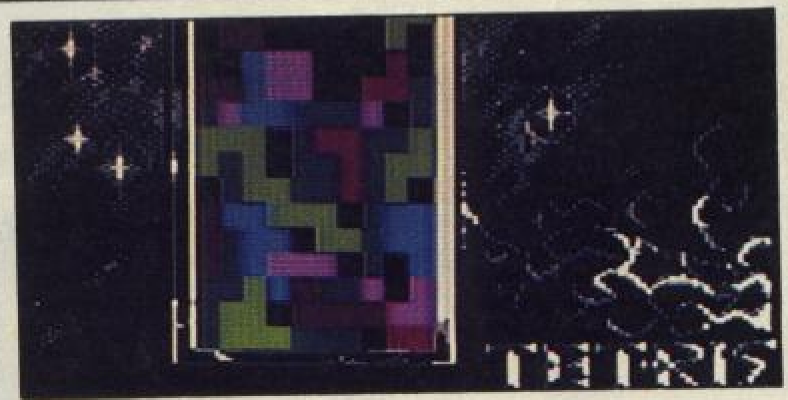
**Mirrorsoft, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys**

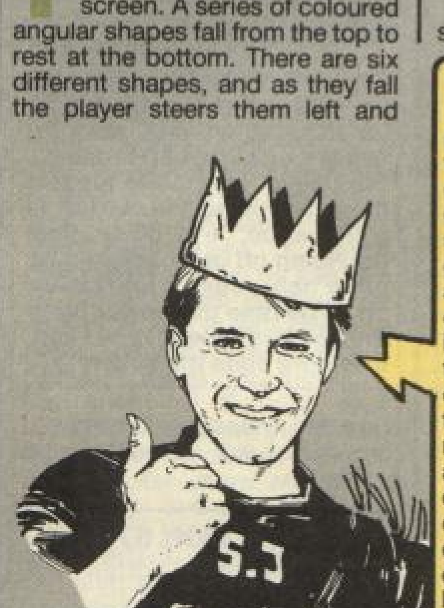
**●Totally infectious, but fiendishly simple hand-to-eye coordination game**

*Tetris* is comprised of a single tall, black rectangular screen. A series of coloured angular shapes fall from the top to rest at the bottom. There are six different shapes, and as they fall the player steers them left and right, and rotates them through right angles by consecutive presses of the fire button. Shapes may be dropped instantly, or paused in mid-flight, but cannot be completely removed once in motion.

The objective is to guide the shapes so that they interlink to form a solid block across the bottom of the playing screen. Whenever an unbroken horizontal bar is formed, it is immediately erased, and all the lines above are moved down to fill its place.

If the player repeatedly fails to form solid lines, the stack of shapes continues to grow until it reaches the top of the screen, at which point the game ends.




**The best ideas are always the simplest. That's a phrase that springs to mind when considering the pros and cons of Mirrorsoft's Tetris. The graphics are adequate and the soundtrack is great, but it's the gameplay alone that provides an irresistible lure. The concept is laughably simple, but it's always the game that has the last laugh: it has a voracious appetite and threatens to consume your every waking moment. Dinnertimes come and go, evenings are destroyed and sleep is a thing of the past. You can buy it. You can look at it. You can take the cassette out of the box. But load it at your peril . . .**

**What we have is one of the all-time computer classics. At first glance, it's difficult to believe that Tetris would hold your attention for more than a few minutes – but I'm afraid that's one of the worst assumptions you could ever make. Tetris is addictive – unbelievably addictive – and it holds your attention and keeps you coming back for more. It's an incredibly simple concept to grasp, so easy that anyone can play it – and play they do! We've been sneaking goes at every available opportunity – morning, noon and night! I can't quite put my finger on what makes it so incredibly addictive, but one thing's for sure – it's perfectly simple, and simply perfect.**

**Well, from the ingenuity of Nebulus, we now have a game that takes simplicity to a ludicrous extreme. Tetris is so unbelievably simple that it seems impossible that no-one has had the idea before. It looks pathetically simple when you're watching, but suddenly becomes more difficult when you start playing. The graphics aren't anything special, but far from harming the gameplay, it enhances it. In any case, your senses are more than occupied with the wonderfully hypnotic soundtrack. I hope that Tetris will finally prove to programmers that it's the gameplay and addictiveness, not extravagance and flair, that make a game enjoyable.**









**PRESENTATION 79%**
Nothing to shout about, with a simple choice of ten levels, and an option for music or sound effects.

**GRAPHICS 67%**
Very simple game graphics, complemented by a gorgeous title screen.

**SOUND 98%**
An exquisite 25-minute soundtrack runs throughout.

**HOOKABILITY 97%**
Pure, inspired addiction.

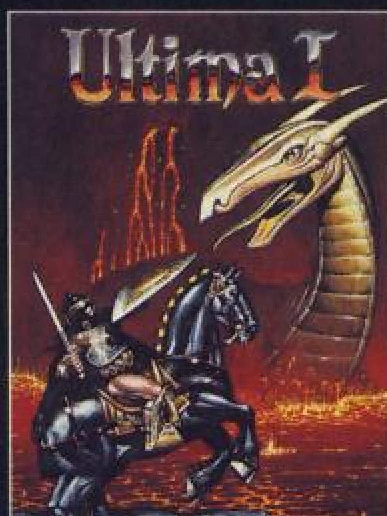
**LASTABILITY 93%**
The game gets progressively faster, and hence harder, but allows enough advancement to give encouragement.

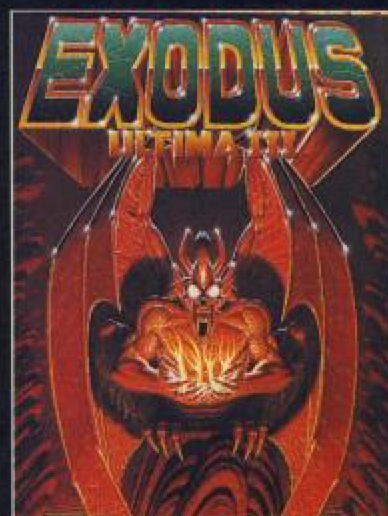
**OVERALL 94%**
Addictive, original, and simply brilliant.

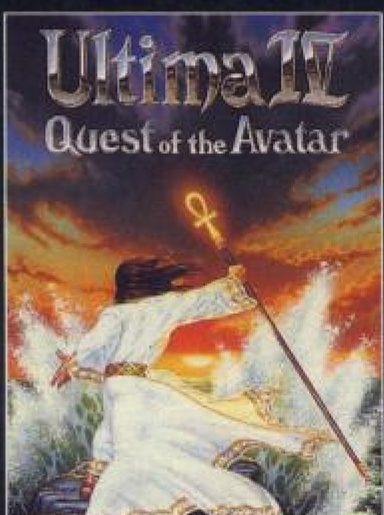
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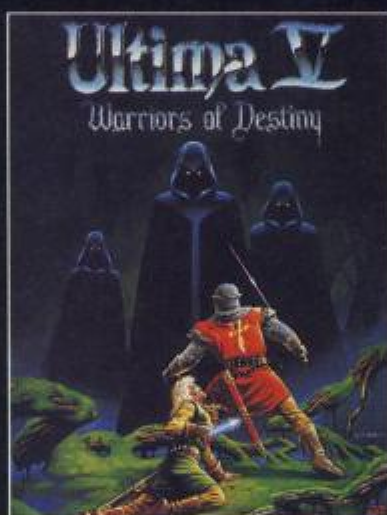
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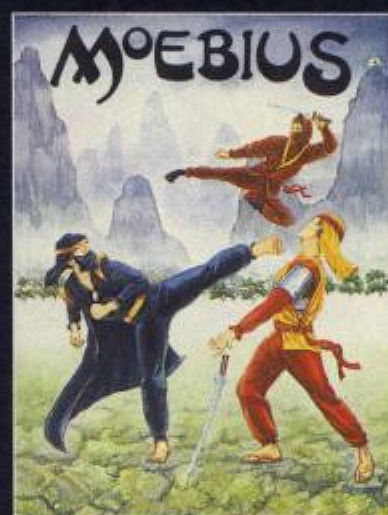
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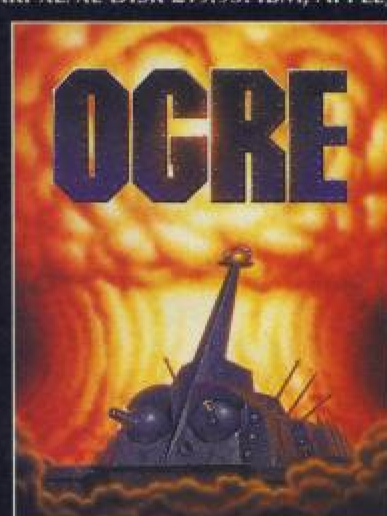




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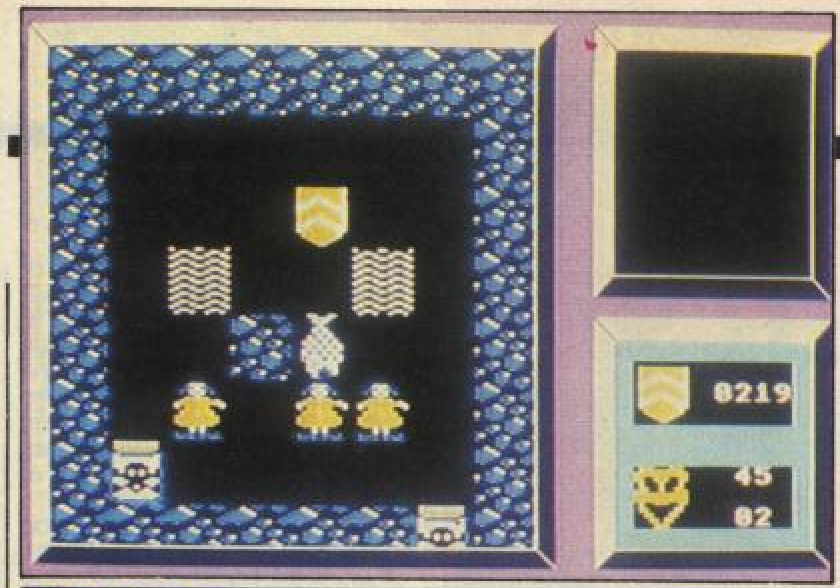



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# XOR

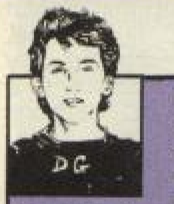
**Logotron, £9.95, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys**

The objective of *XOR*, is to reveal the true nature of the eponymous entity who rules the world in which the player finds himself. This is achieved by travelling through 15 mazes, collecting the many masks of XOR that lie therein.

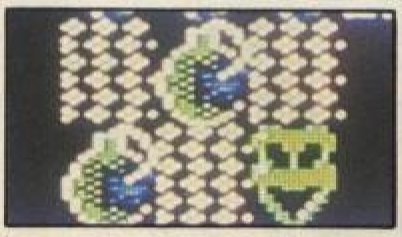
The player controls two characters, Magus and Questor, and each one has individual characteristics that enable them to pass where the other cannot. Therefore both are used to complete each maze. There is no time limit, but the player has a set number of moves per labyrinth.

Hindering the player are XOR's forces – a bizarre assortment of creatures and strangely-behaving objects. There are also useful items such as maps, each displaying a quarter of the current maze, and bombs which are used to destroy sections of wall once detonated.

The player enters any of the 15 mazes, and is given one letter of a cryptic clue to the nature of XOR every time he completes a level. His eventual aim is to complete all 15 levels, and learn the secret of XOR.




**You can spot this game's heritage a mile off: it's a converted BBC game, and has carried the same look onto the 64 in much the same way that the Repton series did. It uses the same over-sized characters, which gives the similar 'claustrophobic' feel – you can't see what's coming as you whizz around the maze. Although similar, the puzzles are far more intellectual than in Boulderdash. Overall, XOR is quite a challenging, interesting puzzle game, albeit in a now overworked format.**






**Maze/puzzle games such as this are very much an acquired taste. XOR is reasonably well done, and can get extremely devious, with later screens having shades of Boulderdash as fish and chickens 'fall' down the screen. The ability to swap characters is also reminiscent of the old Firebird Silver release, Thunderbirds, and adds an entertaining twist to the proceedings. The graphics and sound are nothing to shout about, but the gameplay is sufficiently enthralling to make up for this deficiency. Finishing a screen should take some time – completing the whole game would be a real feat. I'd have preferred a smaller price tag, but if you fancy giving the grey matter a workout, try *XOR*.**

**PRESENTATION 52%**
Few options, and lacking instructions.

**GRAPHICS 62%**
Smooth, but generally uninspiring.

**SOUND 54%**
Occasional unimpressive spot effects.

**HOOKABILITY 72%**
The simplistic gameplay is easy enough to grasp, but the complex puzzles require rather more attention.

**LASTABILITY 70%**
Increasingly difficult puzzles throughout the game maintain its challenging appeal.

**OVERALL 61%**
A little crude for the 64, but a good puzzle game nevertheless.

# GUNBOAT

**Piranha, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick or keys**

Taking control of a new hydrofoil – the HMS Lancer – the player's task is to penetrate an enemy network of inland waterways and destroy as many naval bases as possible.

The action is displayed on a horizontally scrolling screen which shows the river and surrounding banks in forced perspective 3D. The player's gunboat starts at a refuelling depot, and travels inland with an arsenal of homing missiles, forward-firing torpedoes, and rear-launched depth charges with which to destroy the enemy.

The river banks are populated by hostile installations, ranging from fuel and ammo stores to missile-launching bases. Deadly helicopters, submarines and gunboats also provide problems.

The mission ends when the boat sustains 100% damage, the engine overheats or runs out of fuel, or the player heads for the open sea.




**Although Christmas is the time of goodwill, I'm afraid that it would be crime to admit to anything other than complete disgust at Piranha's latest 'full-price' offering. Gunboat looks like it was cobbled up in a couple of weeks, and has slow and jerky scrolling that can't keep up with the boat's movement. The graphics are simply rubbish: infantile sprites whizz around the screen like things possessed, and the backdrops are hardly worthy of a budget production. To complement the incredible barrage of enemy fire, the control is awkward, making the gameplay difficult, unrewarding and very limited indeed.**




**Once you've stuck at Gunboat long enough to master (or at least be able to use) the controls, you realise that the game isn't actually worth the effort. The graphics are blocky and move jerkily, and the screen is cluttered with featureless grey blobs. Death seems to be a particularly easy feat to accomplish, and the general presentation quality is low, with a barrage of confusing and none-too-good sound effects. This is definitely NOT one for the Christmas list, unless you're expecting Santa the Hun.**






**PRESENTATION 62%**
Fiddly controls, with three weapons accessed from the keyboard.

**GRAPHICS 31%**
Weak scrolling, jerky animation and bland backdrops.

**SOUND 42%**
No tunes, but plenty of white noise.

**HOOKABILITY 29%**
Difficult from the start, and it gets worse . . .

**LASTABILITY 17%**
The poor playability, graphics, and high difficulty are all likely to deter prolonged interest.

**OVERALL 20%**
A poor strategy/shoot 'em up, that fails to appeal at any level.

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

# CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

**Electronic Arts, £16.95 disk, joystick with keys**

**●Experience incredible high speed aerial action with Electronic Arts' flight training program**

Brigadier General Chuck Yeager is disputably the best test pilot ever to have lived. This flight simulator from allows would-be pilots to follow in his vapour trail and provides 14 different aircraft for test flights, races and stunt flying.

Initially a menu appears giving the main options of Intro Flight, Test Flight, Airplane Racing, Formation Flying and Flight Instructions. Accessing Intro Flight loads a demo showing a slalom flight between huge blocks, viewed from the interior of the cockpit.

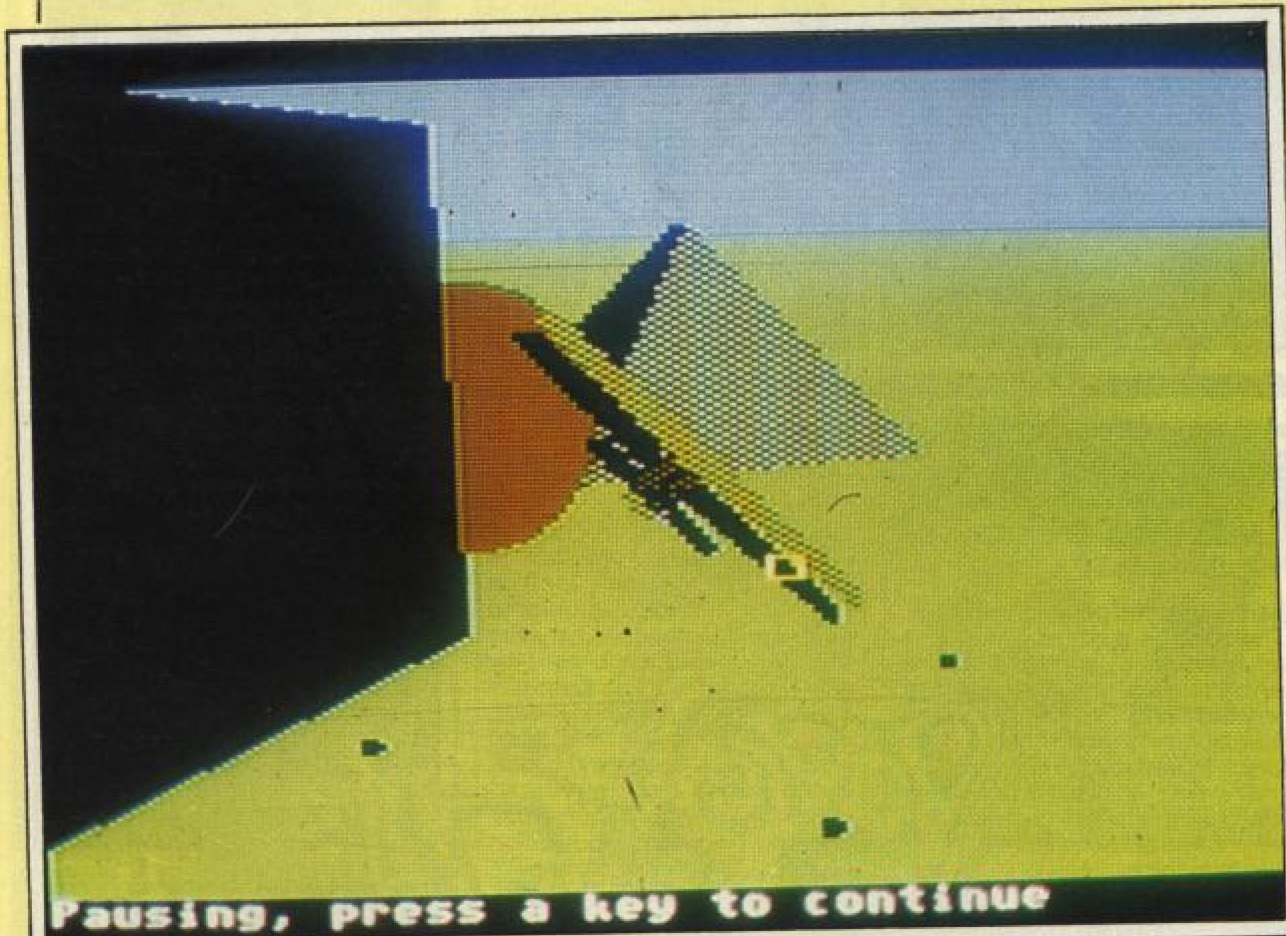
Test Flight places the player in control of the plane in the demonstration set-up. If a different location or aircraft is required, pressing the Commodore key halts the action and brings up a selection bar, marked Location and Plane. The Location menu includes 16 pre-set scenarios, allowing the pilot to begin his flight from positions on the ground, in the air and at the beginning of aerial obstacle courses. Accessing Plane allows the player to alter his chosen aircraft at any time, simply by highlighting the selected craft and pressing the fire button. The control panel alters accordingly, and the plane follows the normal flight characteristics of that craft.

The Airplane Racing option places the pilot in a one-on-one situation against an opponent over one of five pre-set courses. Each course has a straight line marking the actual route to be followed, and there are large 'gates' which must be flown through. The final result and time taken are displayed on completion of the course.

Formation Flying gives the pilot the chance to partake in some aerobatics, and provides a lead plane complete with vapour trail to be followed around one of six pre-defined locations.

As the final title suggests, Flight Instruction is a hands-on training session in either Basic, Advanced or Aerobatic manoeuvres. A total of 22 such manoeuvres are available, varying from straight and level flight through to a difficult Cuban 8. Details are given as to the correct procedure required, and there's also a cursor provided, which follows joystick movement. This cursor must be kept within the moving box marker, which in turn designates the correct location for the manoeuvre to be flown successfully.

Both the latter options support the ability to record and replay the pilot's attempts at stunt flying. Successful flights are saved onto the source disk and are accessed from the sub-menu and replayed at will.



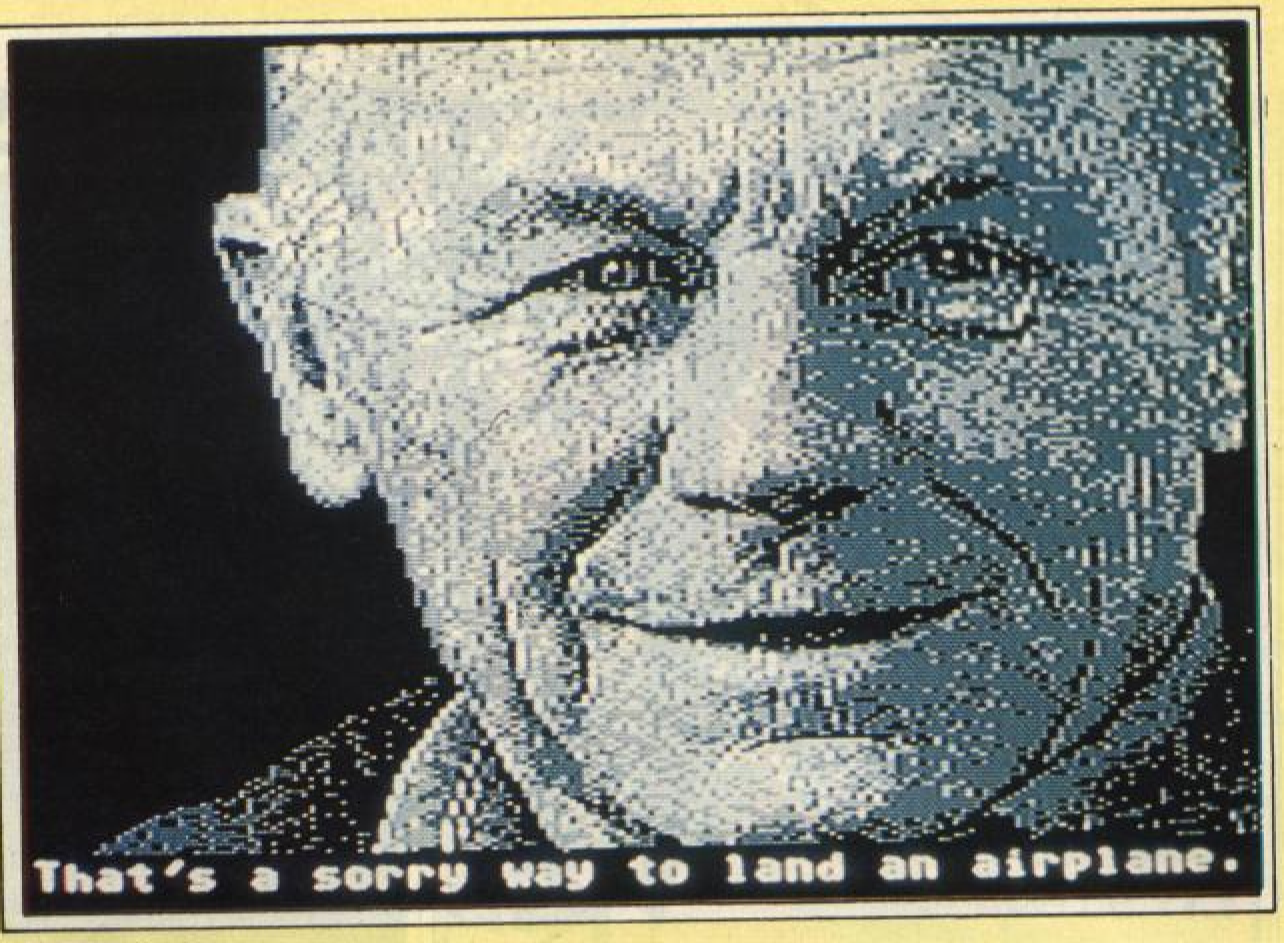







**I'm quite keen on flight simulators, and having heard about Chuck's simulator with filled-in graphics, I was slightly dubious to say the least. Thankfully, my reservations were completely unfounded:** CYAFT **is superb. The list of available options is awesome, and the graphics . . . well, what can I say? The programmer has achieved a small miracle in producing the fastest filled 3D graphics ever seen on the the humble 64. I am truly impressed; they make** Gunship **look very slow indeed. Be warned, however, there is quite a bit of disk access to load in the different plane specifications and locations (it might be a wise move to purchase a fastload cartridge if you intend doing a lot of flying), but this is little price to pay for the entertainment and lasting appeal that *CYAFT* provides. As of this moment, there is only one flight simulator to own – thanks Chuck.**

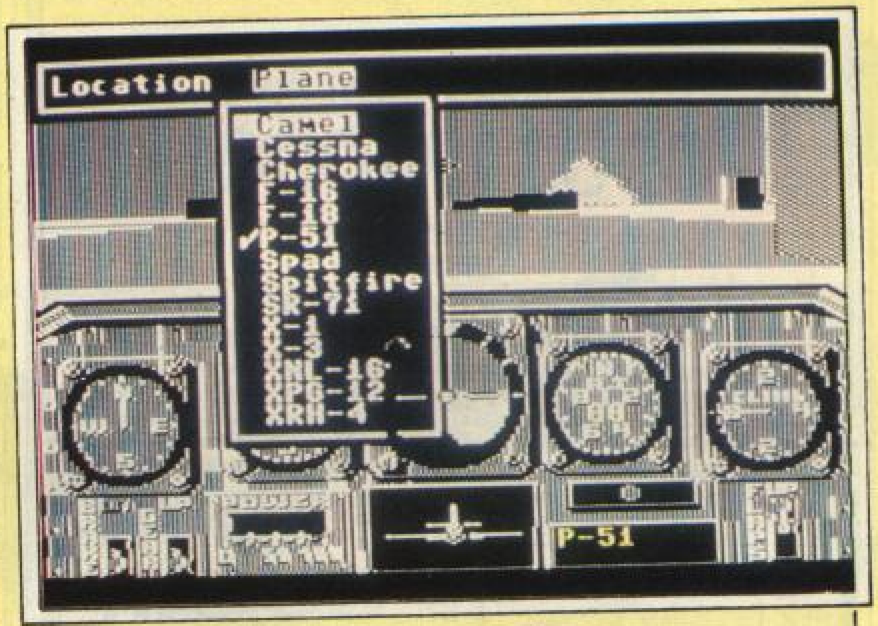



**Good flight simulations are in very short supply on the 64, as there is usually a sacrifice in quality to gain speed, or vice versa. However, in keeping with the recent upturn in software, this one has both filled-in quality graphics, and a reasonable speed during flight. Far more impressive though, is the unbelievable number of options: there are ten different viewpoints, including chaser plane, satellite and tower; 14 types of aircraft, and a 9 stage zoom up to 256 times magnification! The realism doesn't end there – there's a g-force meter, and manoeuvring too quickly tears parts of your aircraft off (such as the wings! The attention to detail even goes as far as the fuel cutting when an inverted roll is attempted in a Spitfire. This is a very well thought out, designed and executed package, and without doubt, the best all-round flight simulator around at the moment.**

There are 10 different viewpoints available during flight: forward with control panel, forward full screen, rearward, left, right, up and down. A view of the whole plane is also available from a spotter plane, from the control tower and even from a satellite, all of which have a nine-stage zoom option to provide as clear a view as possible.

Any flights meeting a sudden and partially subterranean end are met with a digitised picture of General Yeager himself, who passes a terse and unflattering judgement on the player's efforts.




**I'd never have thought that a flight simulator like this could be possible on the 64!** Chuck Yeager's **is incredibly impressive, with fast, solid, and more importantly, realistic 3D graphics, and a mindblowing array of options. Not only are there a wide variety of planes to choose – ranging from the most basic Sopwith camel to the hi-tech Lockheed Blackbird – but there are also races and obstacle courses to negotiate, and aerobatic and formation stunts to fly! The different viewing angles and choice of viewpoint (ground or spotter plane) add a novel twist – especially when you're trying to fly from remote. The most impressive aspect is the incredible attention to detail, with touches like the sky darkening when you go high enough (in an SR-71), and the subsequent loss of control as the air gets thinner. Black and red outs further the realism, and the sonic boom as a plane goes through the sound barrier somehow makes the simulator that more exhilarating to play. The scope for long-term flying is enormous – could a flight simulator fanatic ask for more?**




**PRESENTATION 95%**
Easy to use menus, superb documentation and thoughtful all-round appearance.

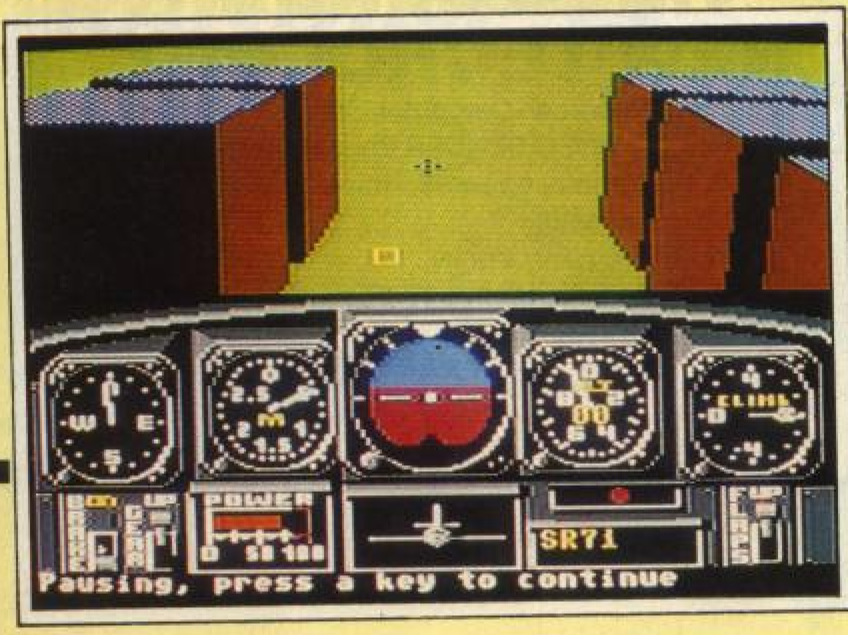
**GRAPHICS 90%**
Patchy and rather spartan graphics, but extremely effective and necessary to retain the incredibly rapid frame update.

**SOUND 48%**
Little more than an engine whine and a couple of spot effects.

**HOOKABILITY 88%**
Includes a wide spectrum of training modes, allowing the user to fly immediately.

**LASTABILITY 97%**
The huge list of options should provide a lasting and challenging array of aerial possibilities.

**OVERALL 95%**
Fast, exhilarating and extremely polished – simply the most enjoyable flight simulator available for the 64.




**NB: DISK VERSION ONLY.**
**A CASSETTE VERSION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AND WILL BE RATED SEPARATELY WHEN RELEASED.**

# ZZAP! RRAP

**For your Christmas reading fare, I've received letters covering a wide range of topics. One thing I have noticed, however, is the increase in letters complaining about the quality of letters I've been getting – and in many cases I can't say I blame them! I have also been getting more and more mail from abroad, reflecting ZZAP!'s increased foreign sales, especially from Finland, Belgium, Australia and America. Thank you for those, keep writing and (as by the time you get to read this it will probably be over) I hope you all had a very happy Christmas – and the same goes for our British readers, except in the future tense!**

## WHAT, WHEN AND WHY?

Dear Lloyd,
In the November edition of ZZAP! there was a letter that I found quite boring written by James Laurie. It contained the most drivel that I've read for ages. James doesn't want to see any advancement in computing (ie Amiga), he wishes that the PBMs/RPGs should not appear and that arcade conversion/machines should not be seen either.

Well James, if all you want is the Commodore splashed over 146 pages you should get a Spectrum, as that has two magazines for its amazing software – I know, I had one. Well with that over and done with I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Will there be another demo cassette?
2. What happened to the letter of the month (November edition).
3. How come the November edition was 25p dearer (why didn't you tell us)?
4. Brilliant 3-D tips, will there be any more?

**Tyrone Mann, Essex**

*It isn't likely that there will be another demo cassette, at least for some time, largely because they cost about £50,000 each to do, and even putting up the issue price doesn't cover the cost by any means! In November there just wasn't a letter worth the prize – happens sometimes. The price rise was something you should have been warned about, but Ciarán Brennan, to be frank, was a bit tied up with leaving Ludlow, and must have forgotten. 3D tips maybe, but 3D there certainly is, in this very issue.*

**LM**

## ZZAP! RANDINESS

Dear Lloyd,
I have moved to South Africa and have found that ZZAP! 64 is not sold in this country. The only magazines which are sold here are *C&VG* and *Commodore User* both of which are more worried about politics than printing sensible software letters. After living in Europe for nearly one year I have grown accustomed to reading your magazine I found that your magazine was very much up to date and enjoyed your tips and reviews sections.

I feel that if ZZAP! 64 was sent to South Africa for sale it would do very well. Even at the price of R5,00 (£1.50) many of my friends are willing to buy a sensible magazine like yours. Many people in South Africa are turning away from *Commodore User* and there aren't many other magazines to turn to. Please could you try and export your mag to South Africa.

**B Le Roux, Natal, South Africa**

*We've no plans to send ZZAP! to South Africa.*

**LM**

## FROMAGED OFF

Dear Lloyd,
It's not fair! This really cheeses me off! Every month I look at ZZAP! I see the same thing and now you do a two-page spread of it. It's the high score list. Not that I've got anything against high scores, it's just that how am I ever going to get my name on it? Look at those scores! 250,900 for *Panther*! I can't even get over 32,000! 1,006,466 for *Sanxion*! I feel good getting 45,000!

Is it just me? Am I the only one who can't play games? Or is it that all you Britishers spend every single moment in front of your TV screens wobbling joysticks? I can't figure it out? Can you help?

**Nick Rogers, Hazelbrook, Australia**

*Ah yes, but we 'Britishers' don't have to spend all our time avoiding being eaten by crocodiles. Perhaps that has something to do with it?*

**LM**

## WHO PLAYTESTS?

Dear Lloyd,
I'd like to ask software houses who they get to playtest games before they are released. The reason I pose this question is because these playtesters must be easily pleased as the numbers of games released which have serious flaws are quite high.

Take for example *Army Moves* by Imagine; the difficulty level of this game is such that it damages the gameplay. Now, surely whoever playtested this game (if anyone did) failed to notice this, or it would have been corrected.

Another example is *Renegade*, also by Imagine; it has good graphics, not bad sound and the game idea is exciting in theory, but all this is totally destroyed by the most pathetic control method yet devised by man (this title could also be shared by *Frank Bruno's Boxing*). Not much thought has gone into the control method at all, methinks, and so consequently the difficulty of coming to grips with this will put people off the game.

Maybe they should have consulted Andrew Braybrook who always makes his control methods user friendly and an asset to the game rather than detrimental.

I must apologise to Imagine for just selecting their games but these two examples stand out from the crowd of flawed games, although Imagine are nowhere near the only culprits. It just seems a shame that after all the effort put into a game it is let down by a lack of thought for a particular aspect of the game.

I would like to express my horror when I heard that *Out Run* – the best arcade game around – is to be converted to the 64. The majority of people will probably be drooling at the thought of having *Out Run*, but not me. I can't help thinking of what happened to *Enduro Racer* after being converted, and of the probable multiload system I will have to endure because there is no way they can cram all the graphics and different levels into one load, or even two. I wish US Gold all the luck in the world and sincerely hope that *Out Run* will be amazing, but I hold little hope to be truthful.

**Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham**

*Playtesting is an interesting facet of games producing. I have no idea who Imagine, for instance, uses, but perhaps the ever-watchful Gary Bracey will let me know, and then at least you can enter into a dialogue with him about* Army Moves *and* Renegade*. As for* Out Run*, well who knows, but unless someone has a go, we'll never find out, and if they gave up because of apparent difficulties, isn't there a risk we would never get some games at all? Better to have loved and lost, as they say, than never to have loved at all . . .*

**LM**



# ZZAP! Rrap

## GET DOWN AND BOOGIE

Dear Lloyd,
I've had it!

I'm usually amused by the Rrap pages until some time ago when people started complaining about software prices, multiload problems and too many sequels. Followed by complaints that ZZAP! was giving not enough Sizzlers or Gold Medals. And finally people started complaining about complaining people! My God everyone is begging for original games, but when it comes to writing an original letter all people can do is moan . . . Until now!

This letter is meant to set an example for more original letters.

It's well known that our 64 is an excellent games machine. But with a little more imagination you can do all kinds of other things with it:

Some friends of mine own a disco-show and they've got a 3 metre video screen, but their video broke down and they asked me for help. I started thinking and I came to the idea that my C64 could help. I went home with some records, loaded *Psychedelia* into my computer and started practising. The same evening with 200 dancing people in front of me, the lights went out, Rich Ashley was put on the record table and suddenly *Psychedelia* was showing off on the large screen with me waggling a joystick in front of it! The effect was unbelievable and everyone got going. And at the end of that evening my friends asked me to do it again!

What I want to say is, stop moaning, do something original with your C64 and write to ZZAP! that would be much more interesting to read than a complaining letter about multiloads!

**Benjamen Dehhas, Holland**

*And so it is too. Considering just how much in the way of interactive peripherals there is available, and how much is likely to be around within the next two years, I'm surprised so few users seem to see any interest in the computer beyond the obvious. How many other people are there who do different things with their Commodore? Let me know.*

**LM**

## EXCELLENT VALUE

Dear Lloyd,
I cannot comprehend what I've just seen. A compilation tape, by Ocean, called *Six Star Hits* has just hit Australian computer game shelves – and it contains six very new/newish games of the highest standard, yet it's priced lower than the normal retail price for one game on its own.

The games are: *Double Take, Head Over Heels, Mutants, The Great Escape, Wizball* and *Parallax*.

I still can't believe it! Why would a software company be so stupid as to ruin their impending income from newly-released gems, especially *Head Over Heels* and *Wizball*, by releasing them all on one tape for less than the price of one game?

Now I come to the price. I went to two retailers, and one was selling the tape for £24.95, the other for £23.96. The games were priced individually (on tape) for between £29.95 and £39.95!

And the games average a ZZAP! rating of around 86%, despite *Double Take*'s 48%.

Lloyd, is this only in Australia, or is Ocean trying to send itself bankrupt in Britain too? I for one would have bought at least two of those brilliant releases individually at their high prices, but Ocean have now kindly provided me with a £35.00 to £55.00 wallet-runneth-overness!

My only thought now is for the programmers. Their royalties must be next to nothing from such a cheap compilation. And, from the ZZAPers point of view, those who have already bought any of the games must really be fuming!

Ocean are a top company though, and I do respect them for their success and for releasing the best in software.

Hoo Roo (as some would say over here)

**SJM Vandore, Beecroft, Australia**

*Ocean tell me that they have indeed released this compilation at around (as far as I can determine) the price you say. They also say it is their biggest seller in Australia, although they obviously receive less money for the compilation sales than they would for selling each game separately. On the other hand, their promotion costs per game are far lower, so overall it is a successful way of doing it. The compilation is not available in Britain.*

**LM**

## . . . AND I'LL DO IT AGAIN

Dear Lloyd,
My last letter did not impress you did it? Well, I hope you like this one; please read it though you may not be very impressed again, but I like it anyway.

To start off let's talk about *Renegade* which got a Sizzler last month. How could you? The game is terrible. The sprites move as if they're on ice skates, the sprites look very messy, the thugs with sticks look like mutants, the control method is dross, though the background is okay. You will disagree with me, well everybody has his own point of view.

I'm rather worried about your Readers' Charts. *California Games* is in at 16 or so. The game is not even out yet. I've come to the conclusion that you have a lot of mindless sheep reading your magazine – talk about feeding caviare to pigs! Just because you say the game is brilliant, these

## HELP

Dear Lloyd,
When entering competitions, can I put all my entries into one envelope?

**Carl Kuttelwascher, Camberley**

*Yes you can Carl, but make sure you mark the outer envelope somewhere obvious with the legend: ZZAP! MULTIPLE COMPETITION ENTRY, so we know to open it up to take out the separate entries, and NEVER include competition entries with either mail order coupons/payments or letters to the Rrap.*

**LM**

## BORED WITH WALK

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you concerning the recent arrival to ZZAP! of Mel Croucher's Under The Baud Walk column. Mel has in the past proved himself and his articles to be unpopular as perfectly illustrated by the recent demise (due to popular demand) of Tamara Knight from both CRASH and ZZAP!. Not detered by this, you commission him to do even more of his totally uninspiring ramblings as a regular feature of ZZAP!

Correct me if I'm wrong but I would say his column is meant to be in a similar sort of vein to Hunter S Minson's Fear And Loathing in CRASH, a column whose introduction triggered a certain amount of debate and was recently voted least popular column in the CRASHtionnaire. However, compared to Under The Baud Walk, Minson's column looks positively inviting.

I find Under The Baud Walk blasphemous in style and content, uninteresting and totally irrelevant in topic and an utter waste of space. What is more, Mel's column seems to have been included at the expense of other more popular and well established features such as Scorelord, Gary's Technical Bit in the Middle, and the ZZAP! challenge. You've done it once so do it again, and bring Mel's column to a nasty termination: it's not as if you'll be totally removing him as he seems to have plenty to contribute to The Games Machine.

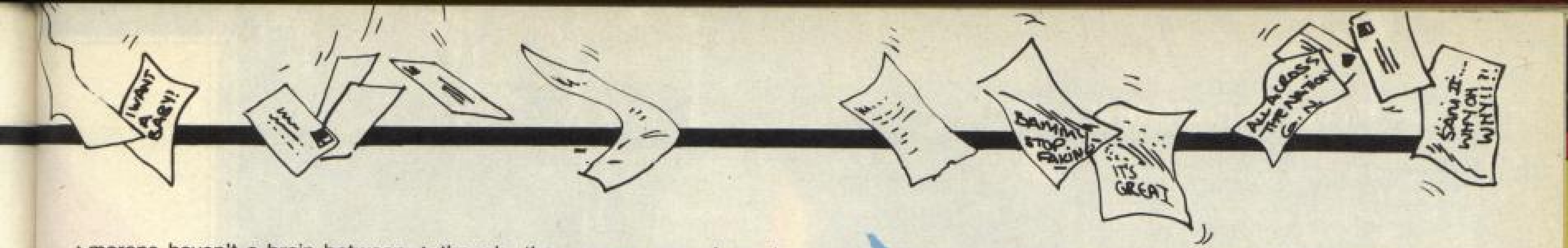
If I may now just comment on the magazine as a whole; I would like to say that I find it the most entertaining of the magazines I purchase. However, (there's always an however!) I can see you rapidly declining to the state that CRASH now finds itself in, where – in an attempt to appeal to the largest possible readership – dozens of totally non-computer related features are covered, eg video reviews, free kiddie comics, PBM, Fear And Loathing and features on Combat Zone(!). Hopefully with the arrival of The Games Machine most of these things will be diverted away from ZZAP!.

**P Shire, Manchester**

*I'm not sure where your proof that Mel 'has in the past proved himself and his articles to be unpopular' comes from, certainly the demise of Tamara Knight is hardly much proof. That was an interesting idea which, after a time, the various editors considered less interesting than the space it occupied. I don't think Under The Baud Walk is in the least like Hunster S Minson's CRASH column (now deceased because Minson has signed up with Your Sinclair); what I do think, is that it might go over lots of people's heads because it is very industry oriented. However I find it witty and amusing, sometimes valuable and always entertaining.*

*The 'state' you suggest CRASH is in just goes to show that your interests are not those of a Spectrum owner, and maybe that's the way it should be. But you have no right to go creating 'proof' where none exists nor extrapolating a situation from shaky supposition.*

**LM**



morons haven't a brain between them to play the game first and then vote. I might get a few spiteful letters from our dim fluffy chums. If ZZAP! said the ZX81 is better than the Amiga our chums would buy them in droves. I'm not blaming you for this, honest! Every magazine has them.

It's good to see the software has picked up with *Wizball*, *Bubble Bobble*, *RMC 2*, *Head Over Heels*, *California Games* and other goodies. And ZZAP! can reform to its full glory now the naff conversions are out and original software in.

Talk of original games leads us to my next point: sometimes someone can write a game that is too original and does not mean blasting aliens to smithereens so some people will hate it and the more clever among us will play it and then love it (eg *The Sentinel*). Some people will hate original games because they are written by a person they don't like even though the games are of an excellent standard (eg Jeff Minter).

Thankfully ZZAP! doesn't grind axes, and merits games on their own. ZZAP! is at its best now with full colour, good reviews and previews. A lot of people will moan because the price has risen but an extra 25 pence is well worth it with the 3D tips and lots of interesting articles and it's good that the magazine slagging is in the past.

Well, now ends my letter, if anyone feels I was wrong I'd be interested in hearing their views. Now it's over to you Lloyd . . .

**Leigh Bartley, Westwood, Yorkshire**

*Well that was a very impressive letter, now wasn't it? You see, you can do it if you try! As you say, everyone has their own tastes, likes and dislikes. I though* Renegade *was fun enough (better on the Amstrad though – no shrieks, please).*

**LM**

# QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Dear Lloyd,
I've been wondering about the computer industry and have some questions to ask.

1. Why do companies write on the cassette label 64/128, when it can't run in 128 mode?
2. Do you think the Spectrum 128 sound has a future against the Amiga and 64, as a friend named Jason thinks the Spectrum can do better. Please print an answer to shut him up.
3. This new Acorn computer, the Archimedes, is meant to have a faster micro processor than any other computer, do you think, graphics wise, it will beat the Amiga and also if it could be cheap and successful like the Atari ST?
4. Has the 64, 128, Spectrum and Amstrad a chance of staying around once the Atari ST and Amiga are being used to the full?
5. Why did *Renegade* get a Sizzler, because I think it's a bad conversion compared to other formats?
6. Why is *Inspector Gadget – Circus Of Fear* by Melbourne House completely different from the one previewed in *C&VG* April issue – it is awful and has bugs galore?!
7. Is it possible for you to introduce the silky tough cover from THE GAMES MACHINE onto your mag?
8. Please can Mastertronic put their 128 games onto cassette because the only companies who do this are Martech and CRL.
9. This is not a question, just a good thank you for doing a good job on the Rrap section and another thank you to the rest of the ZZAP! team for brilliant reviews like *Bubble Bobble*.
10. Has System 3 got any plans on making a *Last Ninja II*? *Last Ninja* should have got a Gold Medal as *Renegade* got a Sizzler.

Keep up the good work, your mag is the best.

**Erol Ismael, London**

*1) That's a good question – don't know the answer. 2) Not really, unless Amstrad change the sound department dramatically. 3) Too soon to say, and price generally reflects sales. 4) Yes. 5) What have other formats got to do with it? 6) Ask C&VG 7) Possibly – under consideration. 8) Can you Mastertronic? 9) Thank you. 10) Yes..*

**LM**

**I look forward to hearing from everyone who feels a compelling need to write to me in the New Year. The address, as usual, is LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. Happy Christmas.**

# AN AMERICAN WRITES

Dear Lloyd,
Just thought I'd write to say that your letters column and ZZAP! 64 itself are the best stuff written at this point and time for the average gamer on the 64, even here in America.

I am basing this judgement on one copy of ZZAP! 64 I luckily decided to buy at a shop in Belgium. It is probably so beat up now that you or the publishers wouldn't recognise it. It's the May 87 issue, and I simply regret not writing earlier, but the mag was lost in the shuffle of unpacking when I got back here to the States.

I read several Commodore 64 mags and only one comes close to the explicit coverage you seem to give even games you end up not liking. One thing you could explain to me. I am just now seeing ads here in the States for such games as *Xevious*, *Arkanoid*, and *Into The Eagle's Nest*. Why did you get them as early as May 87 and it takes us to October 87 to get them?

On the other end of the spectrum, we have had *Mario Bros* for several years and the ad in the back says it is new to England. Can you help me in this dilemma? Also would there be a way for me to order ZZAP! 64 for an overseas subscription??? Please say yes.

I suppose I missed the end of Tamara Knight didn't I? Also, I suppose even if you were to print this letter I won't see it. I would also like to get an answer to some of my questions, so maybe I could pay for an updated copy of ZZAP! 64 with a US postal service money order. I don't see any other foreign readers, so here is some info on me, I am 17, I have a 64 with 2 disk drives, an Amdek monitor, a 1670 modem, and a nifty little cartridge which finishes it all off called the Final Cartridge. I live in Ballouville, Connecticut, way out in the middle of nowhere, but actually only one hour away from Boston and three hours away from New York City. Well, I guess that is all for now, I will perhaps write to the subscription box to see about one.

**Lyman Cutler Green Jr, Connecticut, USA**

*Well let's hope you do subscribe Lyman, then you may see your letter printed. We do have American subscribers, but there is a drawback: airmail is ferociously expensive, and surface mail, though much, much cheaper, is incredibly slow. However, where you are in the north-east of the States, you might find it cheaper to discover a Canadian newsagent who can post a copy to you regularly.*

*The disparity between what games appear in Britain and in the States is easily explained if you look at the way films are released. We get James Bond before you because it's a British-made film and you get almost everything else before we do because almost everything else is American-made.*

**LM**

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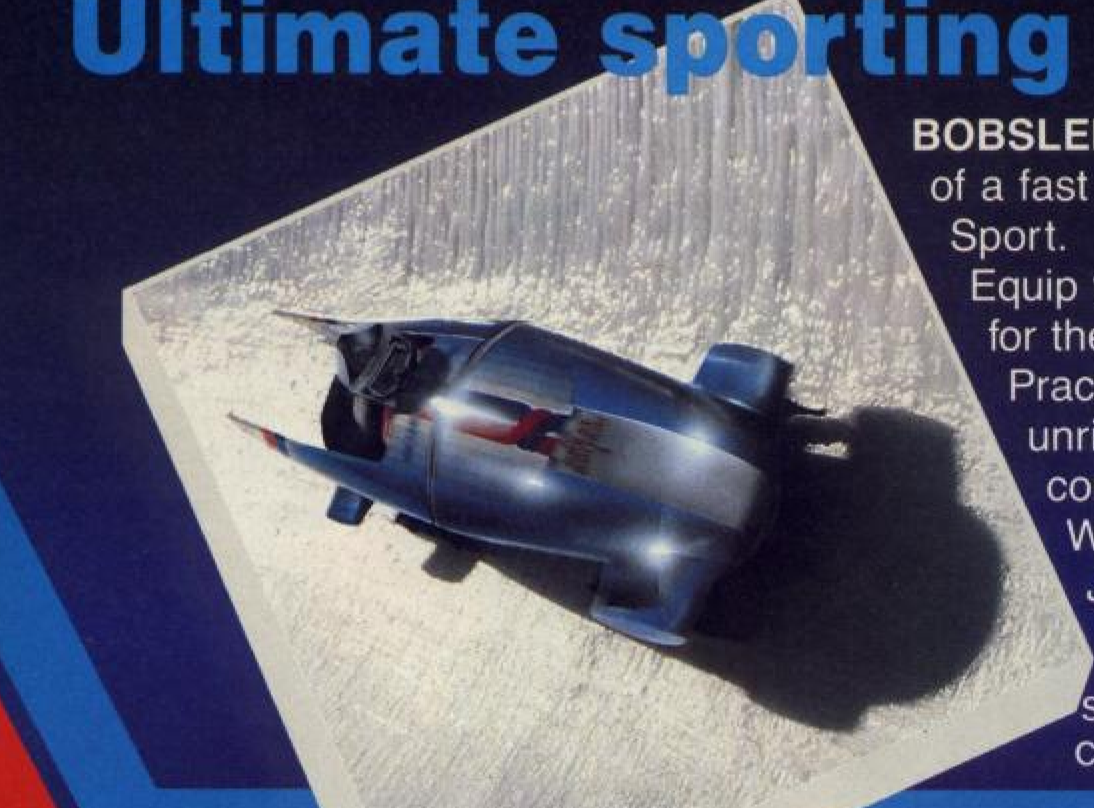


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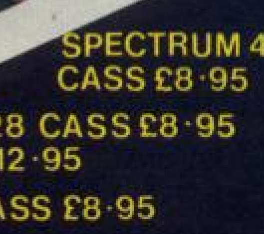
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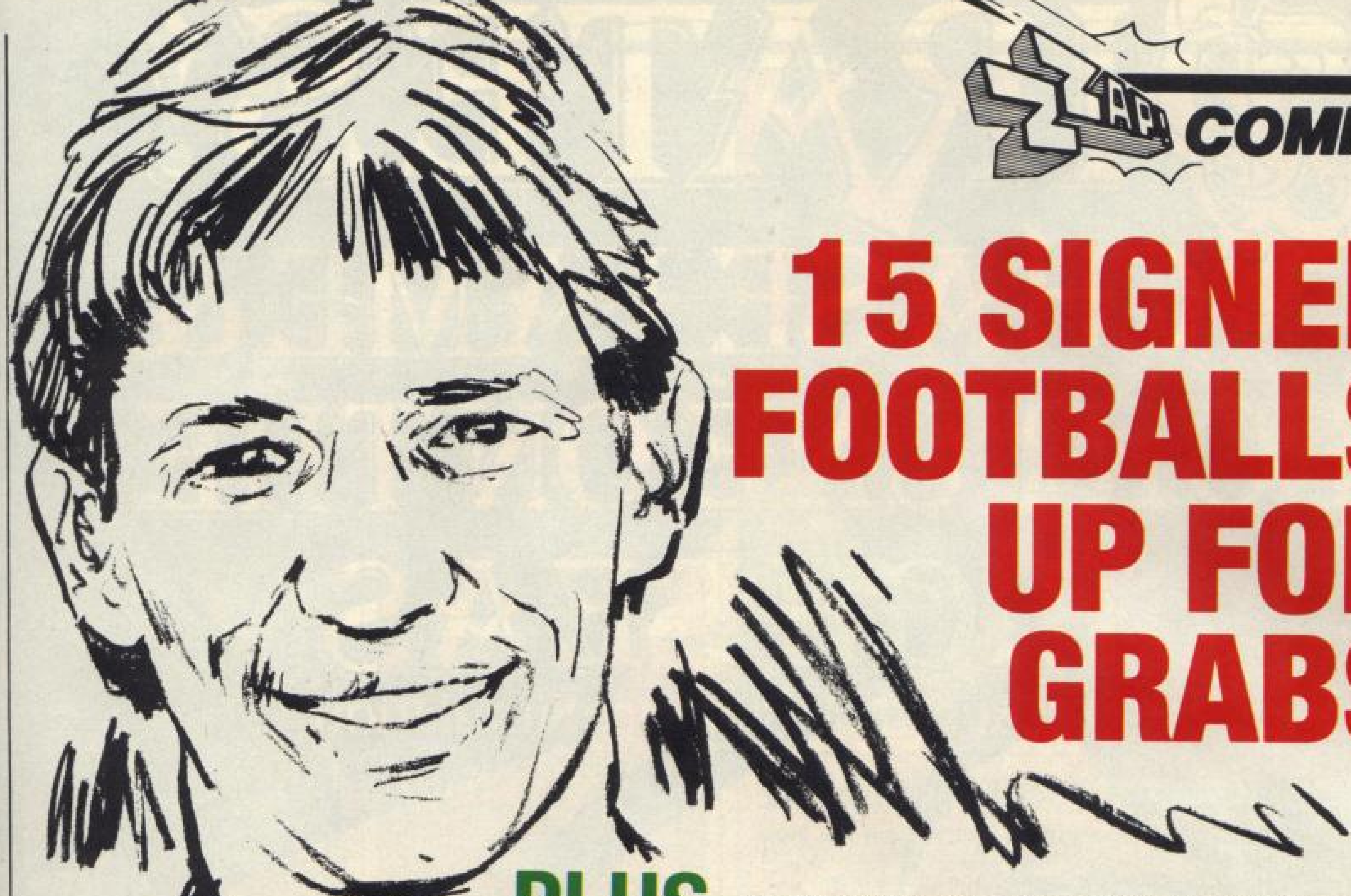
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ZZAP! COMP



# 15 SIGNED FOOTBALLS UP FOR GRABS

## PLUS 40 COPIES OF GARY LINEKER'S SUPERSTAR SOCCER

To celebrate the impending release of Gremlin's new footballing game, *Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer*, the friendly folks from Sheffield have managed to pin down jet-setter Lineker long enough for him to sign 15 footballs, which they're giving away to lucky winners of this competition. Not only this, but the first prize winners and 25 runners-up will also receive copies of the computer game – so there's plenty on offer!

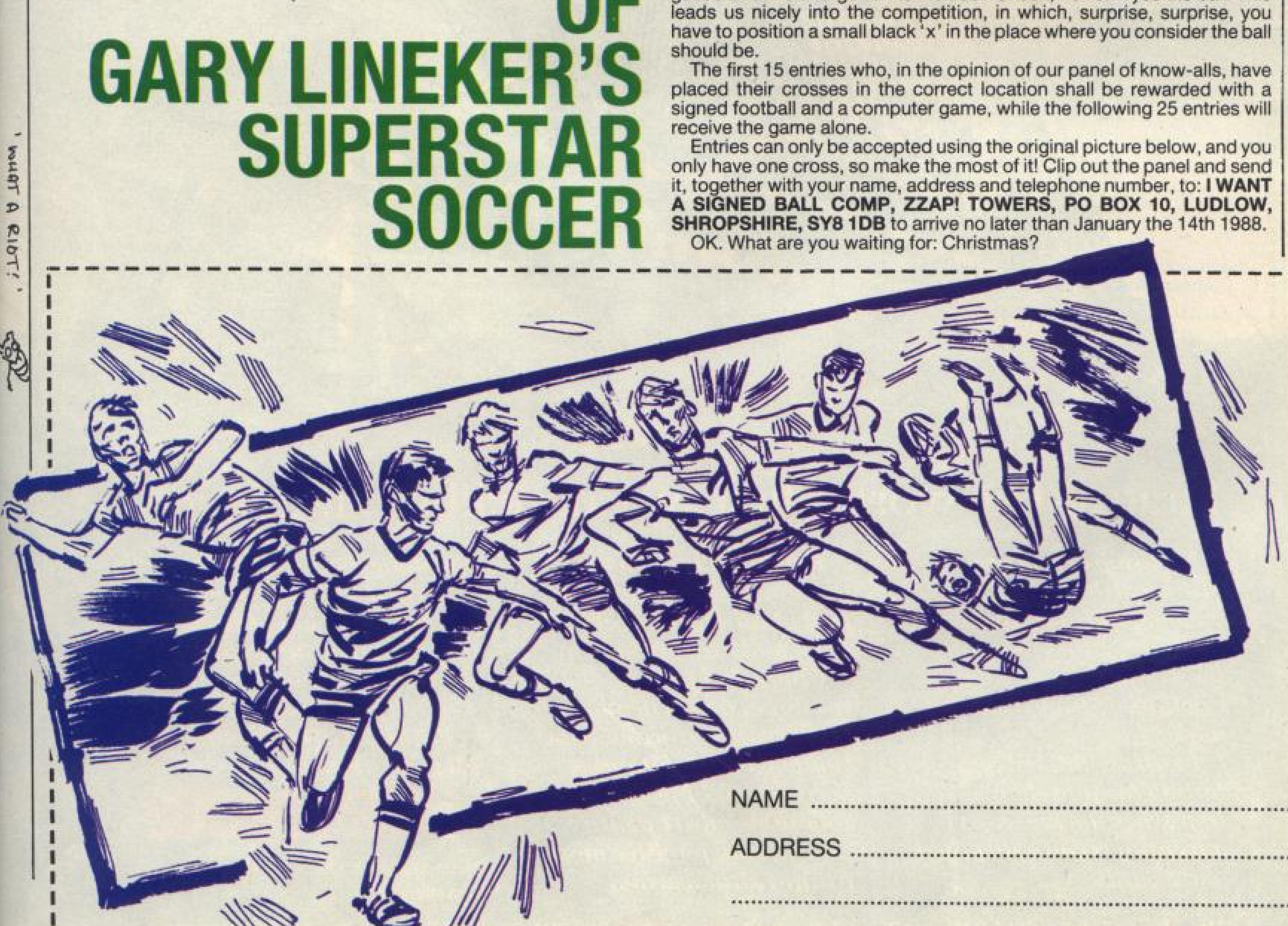
Pictured below is Oli's impression of a typical football match – and guess what he's forgotten to include? Shock, horror – yes the ball! This leads us nicely into the competition, in which, surprise, surprise, you have to position a small black 'x' in the place where you consider the ball should be.

The first 15 entries who, in the opinion of our panel of know-alls, have placed their crosses in the correct location shall be rewarded with a signed football and a computer game, while the following 25 entries will receive the game alone.

Entries can only be accepted using the original picture below, and you only have one cross, so make the most of it! Clip out the panel and send it, together with your name, address and telephone number, to: **I WANT A SIGNED BALL COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than January the 14th 1988.

OK. What are you waiting for: Christmas?

'WHAT A RIOT!'

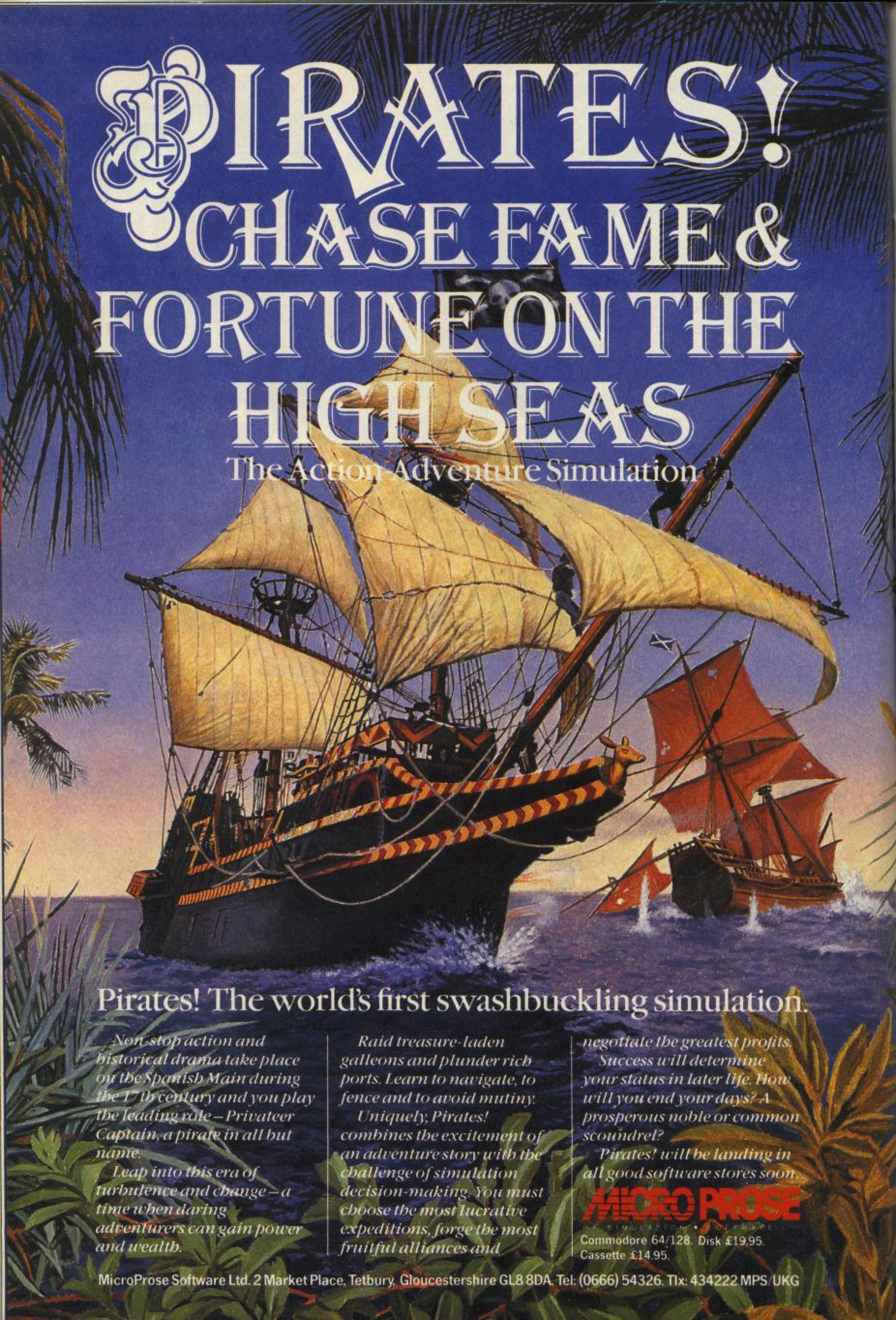


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# ZZAP! TIPS




If you're not in a festive mood yet, put the telly on (there's bound to be some sort of Christmas ad with raucous Christmas music on in the next fifteen seconds), make yourself a nice steaming cup of hot chocolate and grab a mince pie.

Feeling a little bit more Christmassy? Good. Welcome to this years Festive Tips Special, complete with post pork-out POKEs for effortless after-dinner gaming, mega-maps to help those inebriated with Christmas cheer to negotiate their way around, and hints galore – hallelujah!

Okay – feast yourself and get merry. Catch you later . . .

## GERRY THE GERM (Firebird)

Some cheats are impossible to find. Others, like this, take about three seconds. Just press the + and – keys to progress or regress through the levels! Thanks to Jonathan Evans from Leicester.

## ANARCHY (Rack-It)

This odd puzzle/blasting budget game has a simple cheat, supplied by Andrew Veal of Bristol: just type 'CHEAT' on the high score table and you're able to skip levels with ease.

## UBIK'S MUSIC (Firebird)

An interesting little extra in this package appears when you try resetting the program – a free version of PET Space Invaders pops up! Thanks to all the readers who wrote in about that.

## SWAMP FEVER (Players)

Slurp! Sloshh! Squelch! Getting stuck in the swamp? If that's the case, use Zoltan Kelemen 's cheat to help you on your way . . .

Load the game, reset the 64, and type POKE 12424,44 (RETURN), followed by SYS 32836 (RETURN) to restart.

## HADES NEBULA (Nexus)

JG Homer also has some amusing POKEs for this somewhat disappointing vertically scrolling blast 'em up. Load and reset the game so that you can enter these . . .

POKE 3211,255 To become invincible
POKE 3764,255:POKE 3908,0 To give the ship autofire
POKE 3764,255:POKE 3908,255 To give autofire whenever the ships moves
POKE 3177,255 Makes the program dish out screen data faster than the computer can cope, accelerating the ship to level eight in seconds.

POKE 4026,255
POKE 4045,255
POKE 4064,255
POKE 4083,255

Entering these separates the sidearms from the ship, effectively giving you another one!

Finally enter SYS 2198 (RETURN) to restart, and press F7 to clear the junk off the screen.

## CATABALL (Elite)

More Raymond Hefman wonders, to keep your balls bouncing longer (oo-er!). Load and reset the game so that these may be entered . . .

POKE 25132,96 Unlimited time
POKE 24990,234:POKE 24991,234 Infinite lives

And restart by typing SYS 4096 (RETURN).

## DELIVERANCE (The Power House)

Here's the answer to your prayers, if you've actually played this long enough to want infinite lives. Load the game, reset it (you know the routine) and enter the following . . .

POKE 5635,234:POKE 5636,234:POKE 5637,234 For infinite Jims
POKE 5663,234:POKE 5664,234:POKE 5665,234 For infinite Bobs

SYS 7360 (RETURN) puts you back to the action. Thanks go once again to Raymond Hefman, for the fruits of his dedicated program-bashing.

## SOLOMON'S KEY (US Gold)

Here are some POKEs for this fabulous platform romp from Mick Mills and Al, which give all sorts of cheaty things. But before all those cheating goodies are yours, you'll have to type in this listing . . .

```
1 FOR A=4106 TO 4124:READ B:POKE A,B:T=T
+B:NEXT:IF T =1858 THEN SYS 4106
2 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
3 DATA 32, 104, 225, 169, 16, 141, 135, 9, 76, 102, 254
4 DATA 169, 96, 141, 90, 1, 76, 21, 1
```

Type it in, insert the rewound game tape into the C2N and RUN the program. Once the first part has loaded type RUN (RETURN). The main game loads and resets, allowing you to enter the following . . .

POKE 2213,165 Infinite lives
POKE 8854,66 Infinite fireballs
POKE 4899,0 Infinite time
POKE 4762,0 To open the door automatically
POKE 5150, 0 to 31 Change starting level

And SYS 2063 to start the game. Having done this, you can reset at any time, enter more of the above POKEs, and restart again.

## DELTA (Thalamus)

This action-packed shoot 'em up is made considerably easier by Chris Sullivan's mega-useful POKE that stops collected weaponry from wearing out. Load the game, reset the computer and enter POKE 2386,0 (RETURN). Type SYS 6000 to restart. Chris warns that if this is used, you should select music ON during the game before resetting, or it crashes when you restart.

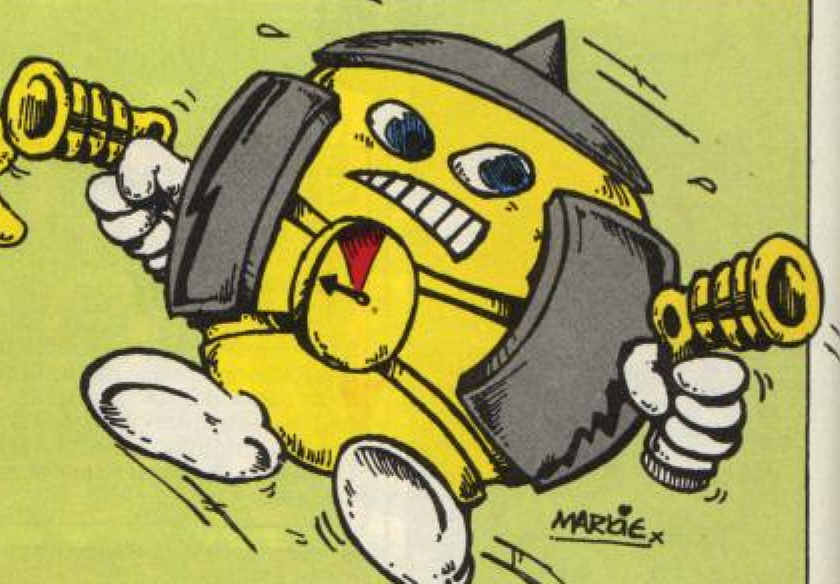
## INTERNATIONAL KARATE (System 3)

If you're tired of just slugging away for hours with this old classic, you might be interested by these POKEs from JG Homer of Long Eaton, Notts. Load the game, reset it, and enter ONE of the following . . .

POKE 3887,50
POKE 3887,128
POKE 3887,60
POKE 3887,190

Restart by entering SYS 2112 (RETURN) for some rather unusual effects when hits are scored.

# RE-BOUNDER THE MAP

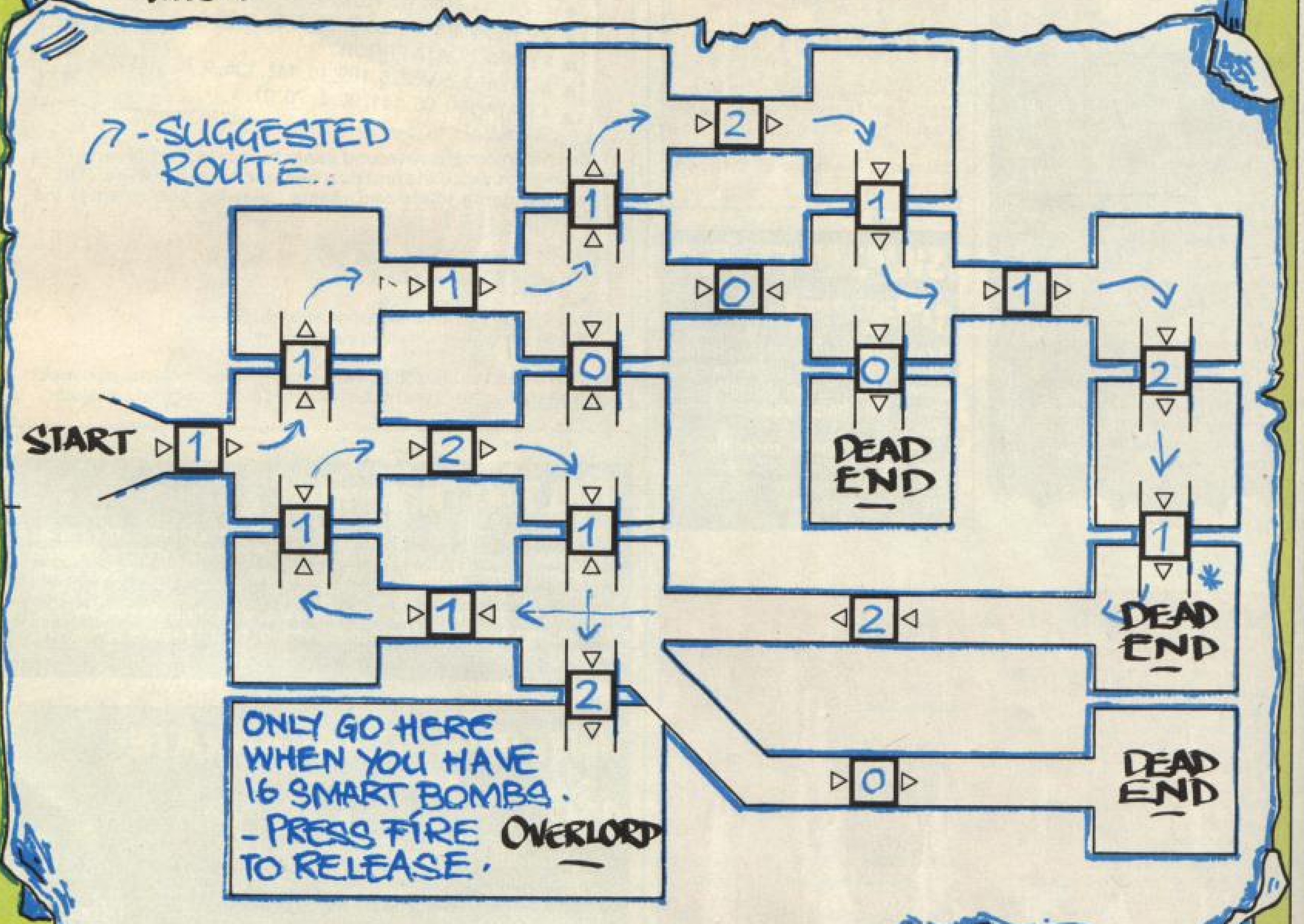



THANX TO EVERYONE WHO SENT MAPS IN!

2 NUMBER OF SMART BOMBS.

△ CHOICE OF DIRECTION (MAY DIFFER WHEN APPROACHING FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION).

* ON THIS LEVEL PRESS THE BUTTON BETWEEN THE TWO "HITS".



## JOE BLADE (Players)

**This brilliant shoot 'n' search is made easier for all you prospective rescuers by Zoltan Kelemen of Sweden, who supplied us with this listing:**

```
3 FOR I =512 TO 565: READ A:POKE I,A:C =C
+A:NEXT I:IF C =5981 THEN SYS 544
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
5 DATA 14, 255, 255, 169, 11, 141, 254, 255, 76, 0,
224, 72, 169, 4, 141, 116, 198, 104, 76, 0, 1
6 DATA 169, 49, 141, 159, 2, 169, 234, 141, 160, 2, 96,
198, 157, 169, 21, 141, 40, 3, 169, 2, 141
7 DATA 41, 3, 32, 86, 245, 136, 140, 238, 2, 76, 81, 3
```

**Once the listing is entered, SAVE it for future use (a useful tip for all listings), put the rewound game tape into the cassette deck, RUN the program and press play on tape..**

## MOUNTIE MICK'S DEATH RIDE (Ariolasoft)

**We never got round to reviewing this. Still, Raymond Hefman from Delft in Holland, has supplied these POKEs for one that somehow slipped through the reviewing net:**
**Load the game, reset the computer and enter these . . .**

POKE 4465,234:POKE 4466,234 **For unlimited lives**
POKE 12637,234:POKE 12638,234 **For unlimited bullets**
POKE 4264,1 to 9 **To change the starting level**

**And when you've finished POKEing, type SYS 4096 (RETURN) to restart the game with your selected 'alterations'.**

## MEGA APOCALYPSE (Martech)

**A deluge of tips for this hi-tech carnage descended on ZZAP! Towers this month – the pick of the bunch follow. Load the game, reset the computer and enter the following . . .**

POKE 22589,1 **For more stars,**
POKE 21841,170:POKE 21842,72 **For a music re-mix,**
POKE 32417,173 **Infinite lives Player 1**
POKE 32509,173 **Infinite lives Player 2**

**Once you've made your changes, restart by typing SYS 22562. Thanks go to Razwar from Denmark, Mick Mills and Al, Craig 'Gizmo' Procter of Tasmania, Australia, and an unknown contributor who gave us the stars and music POKEs.**

## CHALLENGE OF THE GOBOTS (Reaktor)

**Having problems with this Sheep in Space clone? It's a little bit on the hard side isn't it? Well, here's Per Thormodsen, from Gjovik in Norway, with a set of infinite lives POKEs to make it infinitely easier.**
**First, load the game and reset the computer so that these can be entered . . .**

POKE 29311,234
POKE 29312,234
POKE 29313,234

**And SYS 14384 (RETURN) to restart the program with an infinite supply of Gobots.**

## RED LED (Starlight)

**Fresh from Mick Mills and Al comes a plethora of cheats for this excellent 3D arcade adventure. So it's eyes down for a listing, ladies and gentlemen . . .**

```
1 READ B:POKE 16896+S,B:T=T+B:S =S+1:IF
B<>74 GOTO 1
2 IF T<632 OR S>59 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR":END
3 PRINT "DATA OK"
10 DATA 160, 160, 162, 0
11 DATA 142, 118, 169, 169, 196, 141, 63, 85, 141, 4,
87:REM INFINITE TIME
12 DATA 142, 177, 76, 169, 96, 141, 57, 170, 141, 153,
166:REM INFINITE ENERGY
13 DATA 142, 69, 77:REM KEEP LEVEL OPEN
14 DATA 142, 121, 85, 142, 55, 86:REM AUTOMATIC
SMART BOMBS
15 DATA 142, 89, 171:REM NASTIES FROZEN
16 DATA 140, 159, 84:REM RED IMMUNE TO ACID
17 DATA 140, 23, 85, 232, 142, 24, 85:REM ALL
ROBOTS IMMUNE TO ACID
18 DATA 169, 169, 141, 15, 85, 141, 84, 85:REM
WATER LIKE ICE
19 DATA 76, 0, 74
```

**Type this in, deleting the cheats you don't want and RUN it. Type LOAD (RETURN), and when the first part has loaded enter . . .**

**POKE 1011,102**
**POKE 1012,254**
**RUN**

**When the computer resets, type**

POKE 816,167
POKE 817,2
POKE 16501,66

**And SYS 16384 (Return) to start loading.**

## FREDDY HARDEST (Imagine)

**In this new release, the second level is accessible only by a code, given when the first section is completed. If you're having problems battling through it, or are getting bored entering all the numbers from 1 to 99,999, Ronnie Farrington of Birkenhead, Merseyside has the information to put you out of your misery: the code is 25425.**

## ARCADE CLASSICS (Firebird)

**If you really MUST have them, here are some POKEs for this nostalgic budget package. Load the program, reset that holly-strewn 64 and enter . . .**

POKE 4136,255 **For 255 Space Invader bases.**

POKE 19463,255 **For 255 Asteroid ships**

**Finally, SYS 31506 (RETURN) for trouble-free action, courtesy of Richard Hawkins of Woking in Surrey.**

## STARFOX (Reaktor)

**When the going gets tough, the games player enters POKES. At least, he does in Starfox, using Zoltan Kelemen's cheat. Simply load the game, reset that computer and enter POKE 35156,165 (RETURN), and SYS 32768 to restart.**

## WIZ (Melbourne House)

If you were unlucky enough to end up with this dubious quality cross between Gauntlet and an arcade adventure and are finding the going a little tricky, don't worry – Zoltan Kelemen has supplied a brilliant POKE to ease your troubles. Simply load the program, reset the machine, and enter POKE 9652,36 (RETURN), followed by SYS 2051 to get going again.

Zoltan also mentions a cheat mode, accessed by a spell. This is obtained using the following runes:



## URIDIUM+ (Hewson)

Mick Mills and Al provide some more unusual POKEs, which start with the following listing:

```
10 FOR A =272 TO 310:READ B:POKE A,B:T=T
+B:NEXT:IF T <>4164 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR"
20 SYS 57812:POKE 147,0:SYS 62806:POKE
1013,1:POKE 1008,16
100 DATA 162, 3, 189, 30, 1, 157, 236, 224, 202, 16,
7, 76, 0, 224, 76, 33, 1
110 DATA 120, 169, 55, 133, 1, 141, 4, 128, 76, 226,
252
120 DATA 165, 149, 141, 58, 53, 141, 59, 53, 76, 149,
178
```

Check the listing and SAVE it for future use if required. RUN it, having put the rewound game tape into the cassette deck, and press play on tape. The program loads and resets, allowing the following to be entered . . .

POKE 3626,0 **Boring old infinite lives**
POKE 3567,169:POKE 3568,0 **Total invulnerability**
POKE 45917,44:POKE 45918,1 **Allows you to choose the level you wish to start on using F5, the volume control**
POKE 1927,165:POKE 1928,149 **Allows you to VIEW the ship you wish to start on also using F5, the volume control**

The big problem with this is that Mick and Al forgot to include the SYS call, so it's guess the number time. Perhaps someone can oblige?

## LAST MISSION (US Gold)

Zoltan Kelemen is back with (you'll never guess) POKEs for this multi-directionally scrolling blast. Simple enough, just load the game, reset it, and enter this teensy weensy squidge of wonderment: POKE 7927,12 (RETURN) and restart by typing SYS 14848.

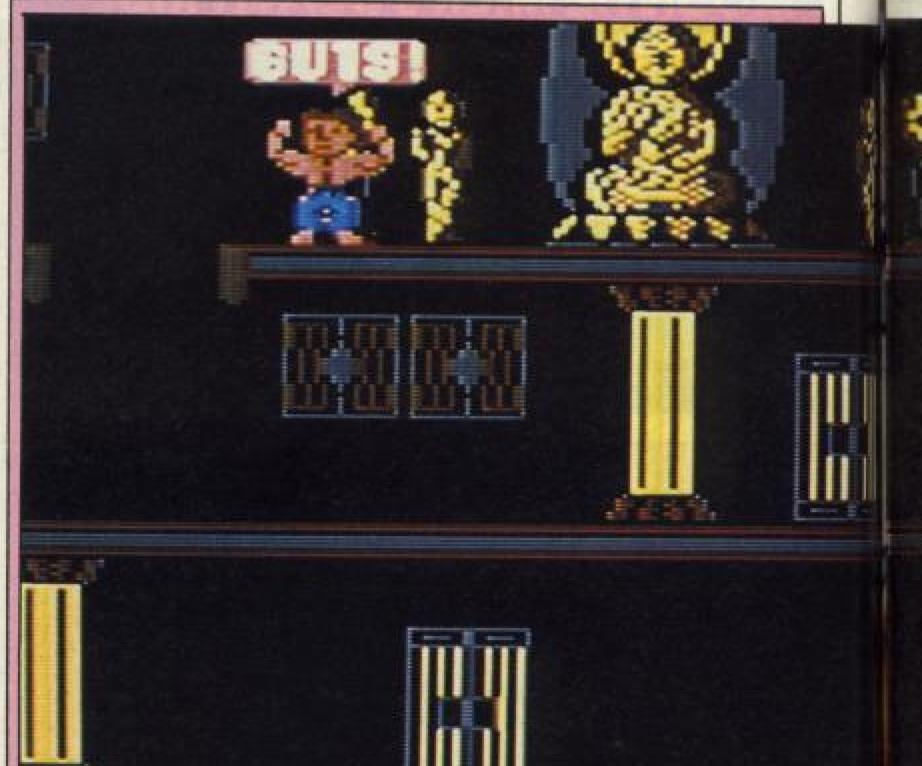



## BARBARIAN (Palace)

Alright, so you might be extremely impressive at combat, able to decapitate opponents right up to the seventh level, but when you eventually meet Drax – ¡caramba! An instantly carbonised pile of charcoal. Well, Mick Mills and Al have a 'total invulnerability' listing to help defeat the evil wizard. Just type it in, RUN the listing and press play on tape.

By the way, can anyone find the POKE that makes Maria's clothes drop off?

```
10 READ B:POKE 272+A,B:A=A+1:IF B<>128
GOTO 10
20 SYS 57812:POKE 147,0:SYS 62806:SYS
58451:POKE 890,96:SYS 850
30 POKE 1267,76:POKE 1268,16:POKE 1269,1:SYS
992
100 DATA 169, 9, 141, 233, 135
110 DATA 169, 41, 141, 54, 133, 169, 0, 141, 55, 133
120 DATA 76, 9, 128
```




## SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)

Ah! Some invincibility POKEs for this unspectacular platform game from Denzil and Shortstop WS. Load the game, reset it and enter . . .

POKE 17187, 234
POKE 17188, 234
POKE 17189, 234

And SYS 16406 to restart with zillions of lives.

## HYBRID (Ariolasoft)

Zoltan Kelemen appears again, this time with some POKEs for this low-profile strategy arcade adventure. Load and reset the game, so that these can be entered . . .

POKE 13733,0
POKE 13938,0
POKE 13853,0
POKE 14068,0
POKE 13793,0
POKE 14003,0

And SYS 4960 (RETURN) restarts the action.

## BUBBLE BOBBLE (Firebird)

Great secrets of the game world number 1387: The Secret Room. Simple, really. Go through to level 20 without losing a life and a door to the bonus screen appears. If you manage the same till level 30, another one pops up, and on 40, 50 and so forth. Note that during a two player game, one player can afford lose a life, but if both do, the room doesn't appear.

Another small tip: if you collect a dome or cone shaped object, you receive a huge fruit or jewel as a bonus. Just before popping he last bully, pump out dozens of bubbles, as these all turn to jewels or fruits when the main one appears.

Thanks to Ashley Dawson, from Littleborough in Lancashire, for those juicy tips.



## INTERNATIONAL KARATE + (System 3)

From within the bowels of our very office comes a wild 'n' whacky tip. If you've just been floored and expect to be on the ground for a few precious seconds, pause and unpause the game to make your man stand up! Be prepared for action, though, as you often go down in the thick of things.

## SPACE HARRIER (Elite)

Now a completely and utterly pointless POKE that lets you knock up an absolutely enormous high score without doing anything. Just load the game, reset the computer and enter POKE 6666,234 (RETURN). Now restart by typing SYS 2128 (RETURN) and everything self destructs as it comes on screen!

## RE-BOUNDER (Gremlin)

No sooner is a game out, than some heartless hacker has its electronic intestines all over his monitor/disassembler. Another cruel victim of binary vivisection lies here, under the software knife of The Paperboys. Type in the listing below, put the cassette into your C2N, press play, and type RUN (RETURN) to load the game with infinite lives . . .

```
20 PRINT CHR$ (147)
30 FOR A=14080 TO 14164:READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT
C
40 SYS 14080
50 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 19, 141
60 DATA 134, 9, 169, 55, 141, 135, 9, 76, 16
70 DATA 8, 169, 76, 141, 45, 1, 169, 37, 197
80 DATA 46, 1, 169, 55, 141, 47, 1, 76, 0, 1, 169
90 DATA 99, 32, 63, 1, 162, 0, 189, 58, 55, 157
100 DATA 0, 4, 232, 224, 32, 208, 245, 76, 0
110 DATA 4, 169, 51, 32, 63, 1, 169, 52, 32
120 DATA 63, 1, 169, 234, 141, 36, 145, 141, 37
130 DATA 145, 141, 38, 145, 76, 16, 128, 0, 0, 0
```

## DOOMDARK'S REVENGE (Beyond)

Now you'd better get your concentration up for the next one, as it's a bit complex. Jeff Davis from Peterborough in Cambs has sent in a mega-listing for this mega-game, which gives you an amazing pøwer – you can recruit Shareth from the character menu and see where she is. When on any character's view screen, press 'Z' followed by the select key (INST/DEL) and you should find character number 4 is Shareth. Once you've finished, you MUST return her to computer control, or she won't move, so press 'X' on any view screen. To begin with, get typing . . .

```
20 FOR X=679 TO 746
30 READ D:POKE X,D:T=T+D:NEXT X
40 IF T<>7728 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
100 DATA 32, 133, 101, 173, 255, 11, 48, 5, 173
110 DATA 119, 2, 240, 243, 133, 210, 165, 210
120 DATA 201, 90, 240, 12, 201, 88, 240, 22, 160
130 DATA 0, 140, 255, 11, 76, 84, 105, 173, 4, 139
140 DATA 201, 0, 240, 8, 141, 234, 2, 169, 0, 141
150 DATA 4, 139, 76, 84, 105, 173, 4, 139, 201, 0
160 DATA 208, 6, 173, 234, 2, 141, 4, 139, 76, 84
170 DATA 105, 1
```

SAVE and then RUN the program. Type POKE 43,167:POKE 44,2:POKE 45,235:POKE 46,2:CLR (RETURN). Insert a blank cassette or disk, and type SAVE "DOOMCHEAT" (RETURN) (to save to cassette) or SAVE "DOOMCHEAT",8 (RETURN) (to save to disk). This saves the machine code.

Load Doomdark's Revenge, and reset it. Next, LOAD the cheat game using LOAD "DOOMCHEAT",1,1 (RETURN) (cassette) or LOAD "DOOMCHEAT",8,1 (disk) and type:

POKE 2048, 162:POKE 2049, 255:POKE 2050, 154:POKE 2051, 32:POKE 2052, 128:POKE 2053,9 (RETURN)

POKE 26944, 76:POKE 26945, 167:POKE 26946, 3:SYS 2048 (RETURN)

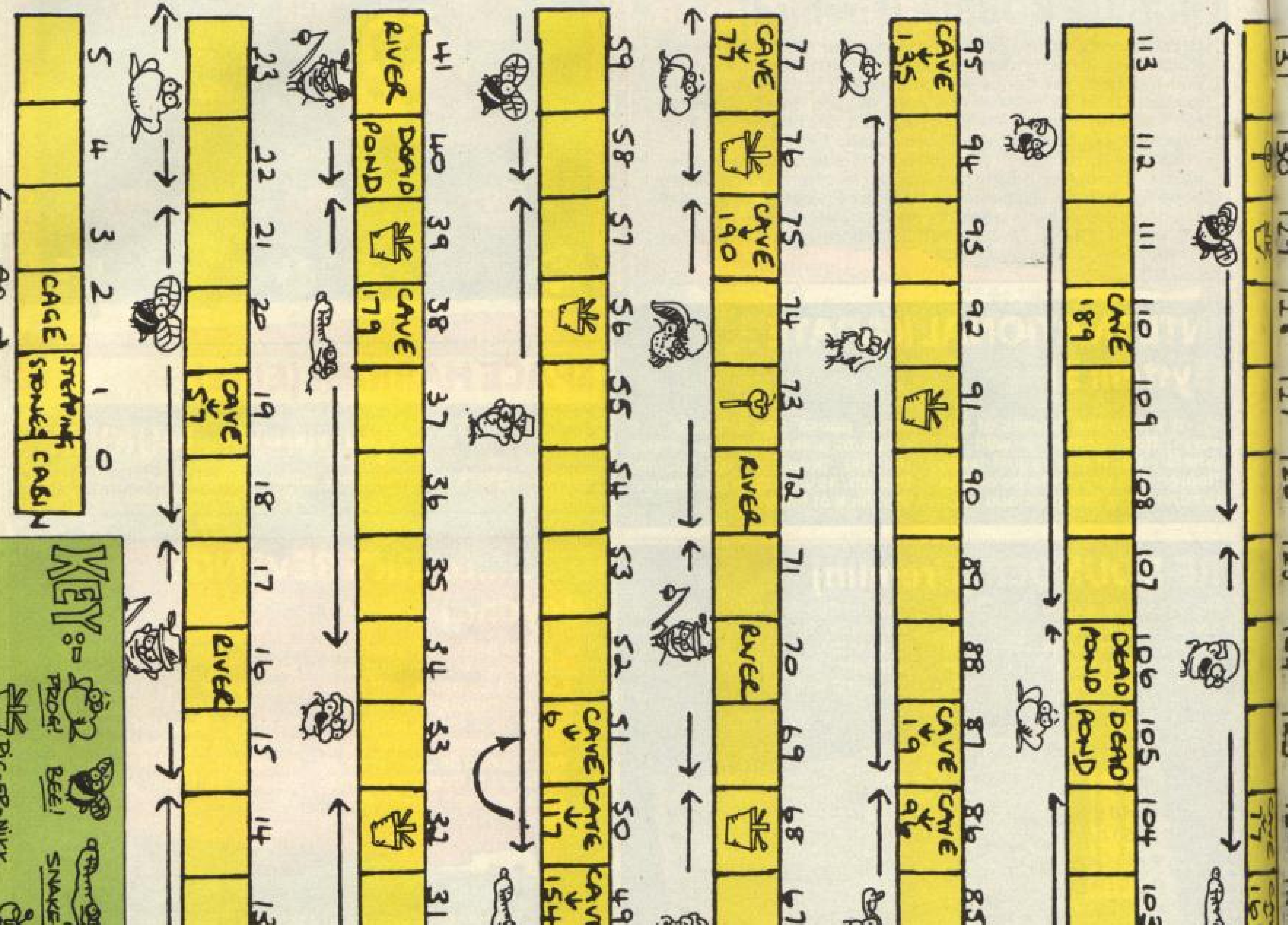
The game should now restart with the cheat working.
As an added bonus, if you want to find out where Morkin is, instead of Shareth, change the four single '4's in lines 130 to 160 to '1's.

## DONKEY KONG (Ocean)

There's life in this old dog (or should that be ape) yet, as Ocean proved a while ago with this remake of the arcade classic. If you're still useless at it, Mick Mills and Al have provided a totally over-the-top listing, which makes the game ludicrously easy. Here it is . . .

```
1 READ B:POKE 36855+S,B:S=S+1:T=T+ B:IF
B<>1 GOTO 1
2 IF S<18 OR T<2180 OR T>3883 THEN PRINT
"DATA ERROR"
3 SYS 36855
10 DATA 32, 212, 225, 152, 32, 213, 255, 169, 144,
141, 85, 5, 96, 169, 169
11 DATA 141, 181, 31:REM FALL ANY DISTANCE
12 DATA 141, 18, 51:REM KONG INACTIVE
13 DATA 169, 96, 141, 46, 17:REM NASTIES INEF-
FECTIVE
14 DATA 169, 165, 141, 163, 33:REM INFINITE LIVES
15 DATA 76, 4, 1
```

You should know the routine by now, but here it is anyway – type in the listing, stick the rewound Donkey Kong tape in the cassette deck and type RUN (RETURN).


KEY:-
FROG!
BEE!
SNAKE!
ANGLER!
CHASER!
BIRD!
CAMPER!
HUNTER!
RANGER!
MOOSE!
PIC-EE-NIKK BASKET!
TOFFEE APPLE!
AND OF COURSE...
BOO! BOO!
GOOD BYE ZZAPPERS — N.A.
MARKKIE x——.
CAGE
STEPPING STONES
CABIN

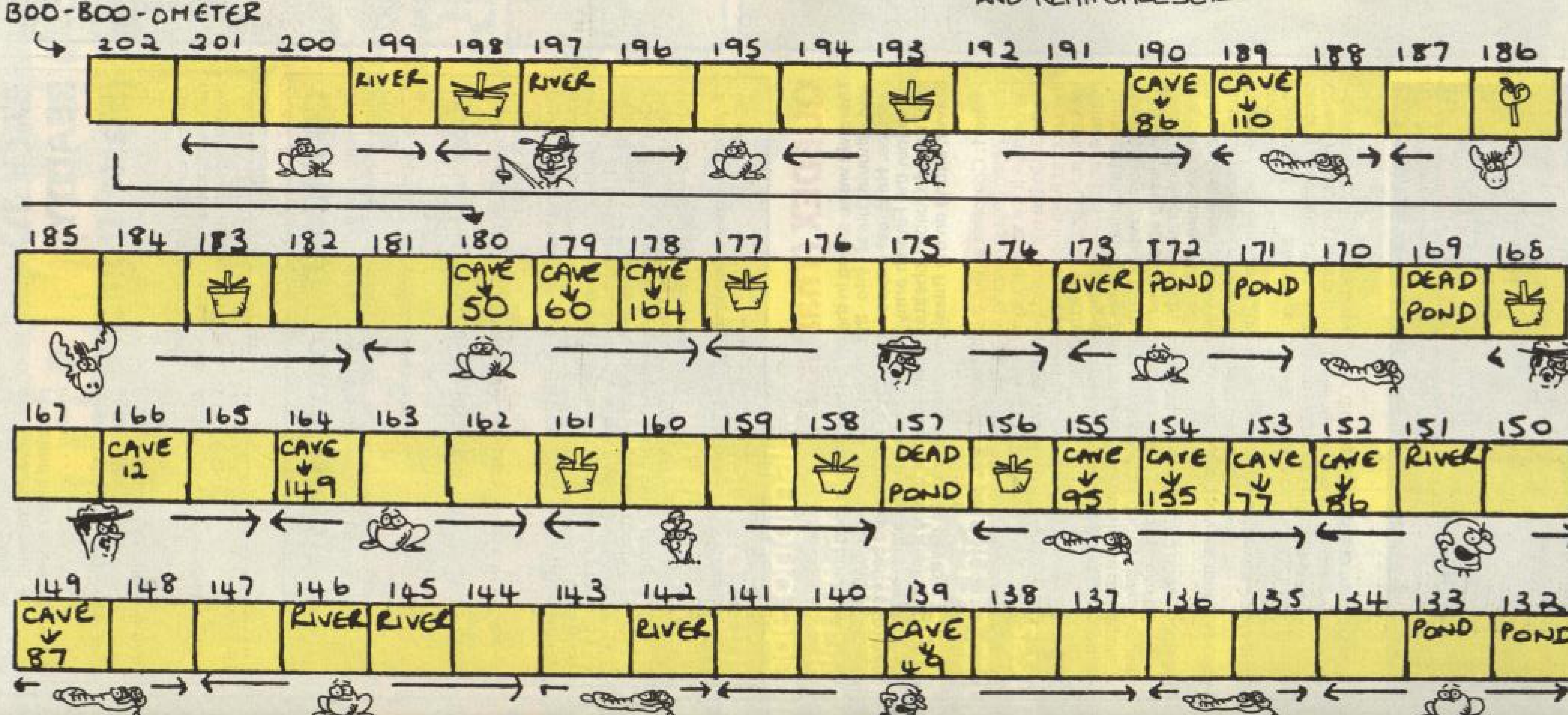
HEY! HEY! HEY! IT'S.....

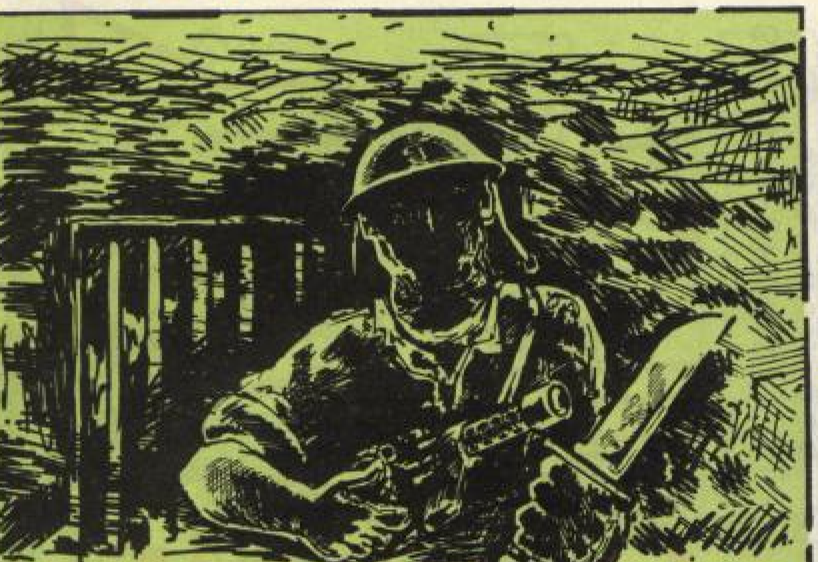
# YOGI BEAR

## SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE MAP!



MAPPED BY BERTIE BRIE AND KEITH CHEESE!

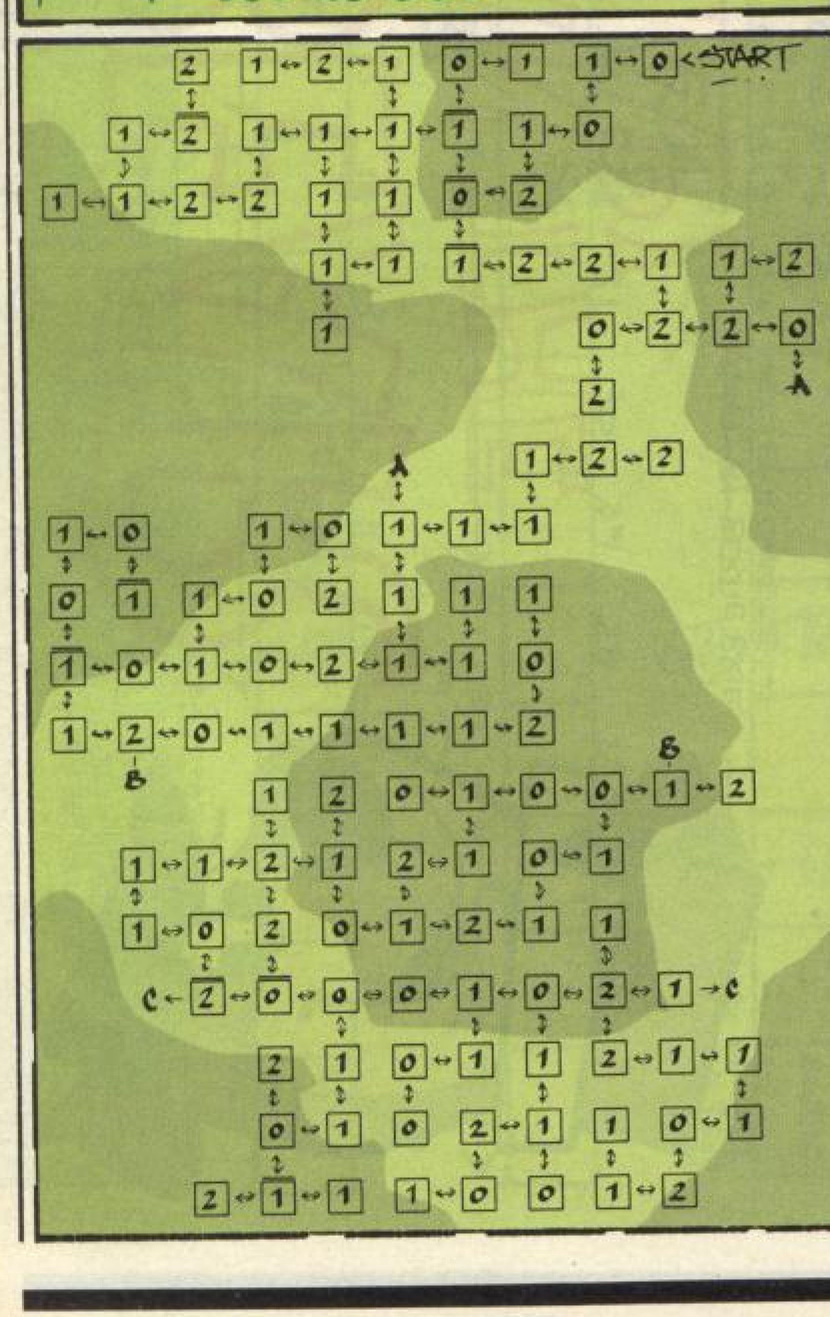




# JOE BLADE

2 – Number of men in room (If 1 man – Jump, if 2 men then Fire.)

– Locked door.




## BACK TO REALITY (Mastertronic)

This rather poor arcade adventure is made a little easier with the help of the following POKEs.

Load the game, press 'Q' on the title screen to reset the computer and enter either of the following . . .

POKE 27337,96 (To stop all sprite collisions)
POKE 20109,173 (For infinite lives)

And restart the action by typing SYS 16384.

## COSMONUT (Code Masters)

This isn't exactly brilliant, so if you'd like to spice up the action use these POKEs. First type POKE 43,255:LOAD (RETURN) and press play on tape.

When the READY prompt appears type . . .

POKE 43,1 (RETURN)
15 POKE 2530,226:POKE 2531,252 (RETURN)

Now type RUN (RETURN). When the computer resets, enter any of the following . . .

POKE 32672,173:POKE 32716,173:POKE 32773,173 (For infinite power and ammo)
POKE 44264,173 (Stop sprite collisions in waste chute game)
POKE 38476,173 (Infinite lives only on main game)
POKE 38873,173 (Infinite lives only on megalaser room)
POKE 44960,173 (Infinite lives only on waste chute game)
POKE 32817,96 (Infinite lives on every game)
POKE 32244,0 to 100) (Extra power)

And then start by entering SYS 31744. Thanks Sean and Adrian Meads (again).

## QUEDEX (Thalamus)

There we were, sitting in the office minding our own business, when who should burst into the room but Finland's finest: Stavros Fasoulas. He'd just popped in to say a last farewell before trooping off to join the Finnish army for a year. Before he went, he left these very useful Quedex cheats. When you use them, think of poor old Stavvy, sitting on the Russian border, freezing to death . . .

**Plane 1:** Complete all but the last section first, and move on to the next plane. When time is running short, go back and complete the final part of the plane – it's a simple way of getting extra time.
**Plane 3:** On the right hand side of the plane are eight teleporters. All but the second from the top are protected by invisible walls, so go straight for it and don't bother with the rest.
**Plane 4:** In this mini racing game, save some jumps and leap over the goal to get an extra 35 points and a chance to partake in the race again.
**Plane 6:** Don't jump for the question mark surrounded by deadly squares – it's only worth an extra jump, and you waste two getting to it!
**Plane 7:** Collect all the extra time, and have under 100 units of time left to enter a treasure room . . .
**Plane 8:** The green screen is the easiest, having several routes to complete it. The rest have only one way to complete them.
**Plane 9:** Every extra speed cross not picked up yields extra points at the end of the screen.
**Plane 10:** Avoid the lifts on the first series of conveyor belts. On the second series you must use them to jump onto the platforms.
**Cheat mode:** Try inserting the Thalamus phone number in the designer mode and changing the last digit for different effects and messages.

Due to extra editorial pressures, I'm afraid it has become impossible for me to manage the tips section – so as from next month, ex-Play To Win fellow Dan Gilbert will be taking over.

So, it's a final goodbye. Before I go, may I say a very, very big THANK YOU to all of you who've helped make this section the most popular in the mag. Special mentions must go to Jim Blackler, Zoltan Kelemen, Tim and Ian Fraser, Mick Mills and Al, and Sean and Adrian Meads for their continued support, not forgetting all those who've continually sent in their tips, POKEs, maps and the like. Without you, the tips would have never happened.

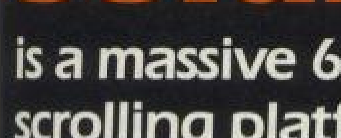
Okay then, (sniff) I guess I'll see you around.

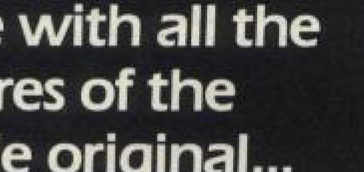
Goodbye . . .

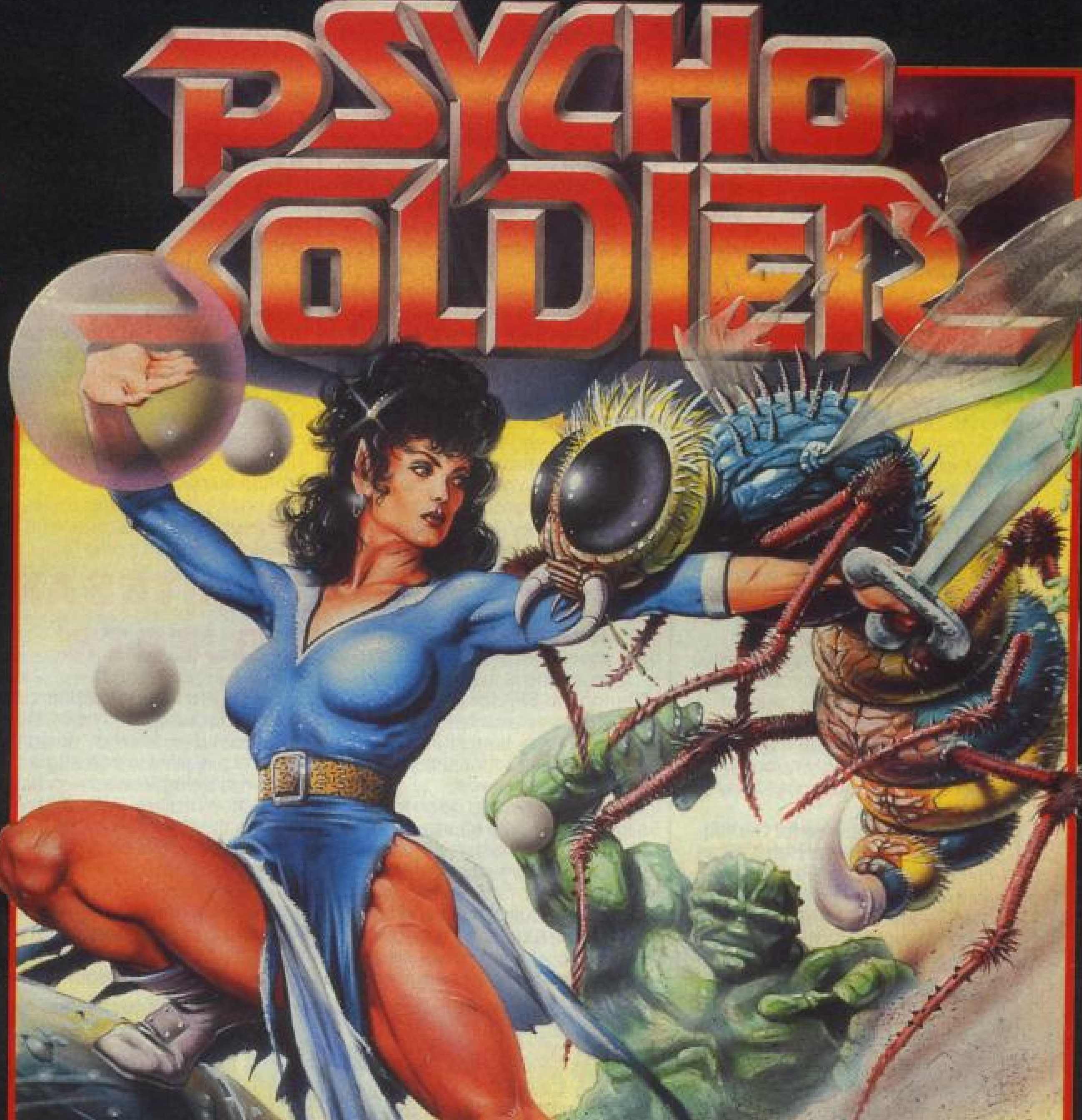
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# THE SENSIBLE GUIDE TO CONSTRUCTION

**Hands up all who've bought the Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit, but don't quite know what to do with it. Hands down. Sensible Software's Jonathan 'Jops' Hare is here to explain how to get to grips with the program, and have fun with a little *Slap 'n' Tickle* in the process.**

The *Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit* is like a game of chess: it doesn't take long to grasp the fundamentals of what to do and how to do it, but it could take a lifetime to master the infinite subtleties of its machinery.

It's for this reason that I've decided to put together an extensive document of tasty *SEUCK* hints, tips and info to help everyone, including ourselves, to fully understand just how unbelievably fantastic the latest Sensigame really is.

It's possible that your first reaction to *SEUCK* is: 'Good God! Where the Hell do I start?'. However, after a soothing rub-down from a Swedish masseur and a refreshing cup of piping hot water, it's advisable that you sit down and re-adjust your perception of the whole Cosmos. *SEUCK* is not the sort of creature that is laid into straight away. Don't sharpen your knives and prepare for the kill – you'd be best off taking at least three picoseconds of your precious time to think out, at least roughly, what you're trying to achieve. What are you trying to prove, you filthy, ugly nobody in the software world (not yet anyway). Ha! Ha!

Enough of that, now for the sensible stuff (double Ha! Ha!). OK, as you know, *SEUCK* is a very versatile tool – it can offer you still-screen games such as *Robotron 2084* (remember that) and *Gauntlet*, or classic arcade scrolling games like *Slap Fight, 1942, Astro Wars* and that perennial classic, *Kill the Evil Alien Bar Stewards*.

If required, game types can skilfully be combined: a bit of scrolling, a bit of pushing and a bit of still-screen, to give you a truly awesome genius of a gem – the software of the 90's perhaps.

It's advisable to master each of *SEUCK*'s separate utilities – Edit Sprites, Edit Background, Edit SFX, Edit Objects and so on – before you embark upon your first chart-busting wonder. For this reason I suggest that you start your induction course by loading one of the four free games in the module and then breaking into the editing menu. By pressing the space bar, you can proceed to destroy all my hard work. For instance, load *Slap 'n' Tickle*, and from the main menu, select EDIT SPRITES and find the main ship's sprite. Now the fun begins. Press 'E' to erase the sprite – of course you're sure – and deface the empty sprite with a portrait of your favourite Page 3 Pin-up!

When you're quite happy with your artwork, return to the main menu and TEST GAME. Bingo, by jingo! Now you've got your favourite shoot 'em up starring your favourite foxy chick. What's that you're saying? When you turn sideways it goes all funny? That's because your player/ship is a directional object, and when you bank sideways, the sprite tilts through the air, just like a real alien spaceship does.

To alter this horrendous ugly mess, simply EDIT OBJECTS and select Player 1 ship. Press F7 and find your lovely lady in the top right hand box by running through the sprite stock. When she appears, press fire and you can plonk her down until she fills all 18 places in the OBJECT. Just keep on pushing fire and moving the joystick – you'll get the hang of it.

Now go back to the game you will see that Miss Big 'Uns is a perfect specimen, as flawless on the screen as she is in the flesh. Change the SFX for Player 1 Fire and you can make her howl with pleasure every time she fires.

There, wasn't that just too fast and simple for words. . . .

Obviously, I could go on forever talking about little alterations you could make to the game included, but it seems to me that the easiest and most informative way to cram these pages full of hints and tips is to give you a detailed rundown on exactly how I went about creating all of the fab free games that come with *SEUCK*. So, here we go with a utility-by-utility account of the creation and manipulation of . . .

## SLAP 'N' TICKLE

The basic idea of *Slap 'n' Tickle* is to show that *SEUCK* is capable of creating a straightforward scrolling shoot 'em up, well up to and above the standard of the average C64 blasters available at present. I wanted the game to be free flowing and easy to get into, so it's done in the classic 'full-screen scrolling with a mothership at the end of each level' style.

Although every game is constructed by constantly changing from utility to utility in order to make the whole thing fully operative, I've decided to divide this piece up into separate utilities in order that I may explain myself a bit more clearly. If you know what I mean Harold.

## EDIT SPRITES AND OBJECTS

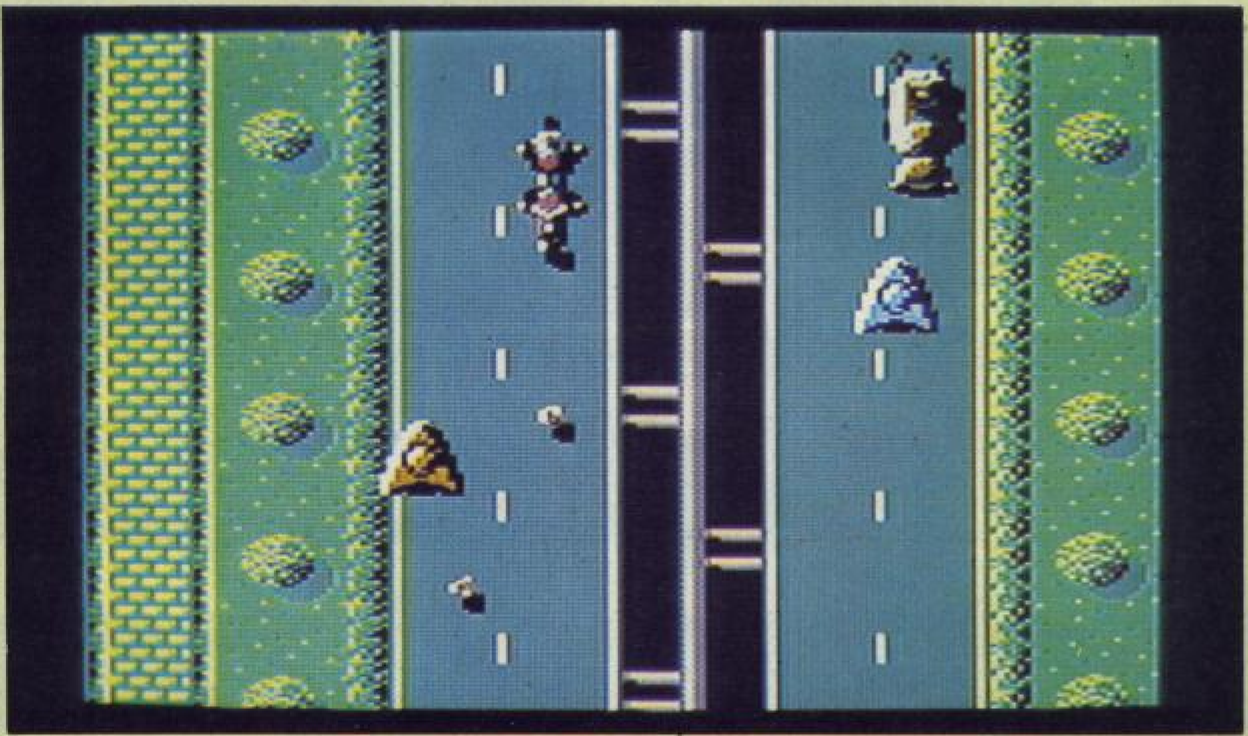
Here we are talking graphics and graphic techniques. The first thing one must decide when designing graphics is from which angle the action is being viewed – in *Slap*'s case, from above. After that comes the direction of the light source (if there is one). This is essential to determine which direction shadows might fall, and in bas-relief graphics to determine which edges of an object are highlighted – that is, defined with a light colour – and which edges are lowlighted or defined with a darker colour. This technique is used in order to give a more 3D look to graphic images. For *Slap 'n' Tickle*, I've imagined the light source coming from a point around the top left hand corner of the screen – hence all shadows fall towards the bottom right.

Once these things are sorted out, you then have a minor dilemma on your hands. You see, Commodore multicolour sprites – the format of all *SEUCK* sprites – are created from three basic colours (the background colour is transparent). Two of the sprite colours, once selected, have to be used in every single sprite in the entire game, so you have to be damn sure where you want them! Choose wisely, or you could regret it later.

With *Slap 'n' Tickle*, I plumped for black and white as they're nicely contrasting for a sharp light/shadow effect, and they're also the strongest colours on the C64, really bringing the sprites to life and making them stand out from the relatively pastel background.

## PLAYER 1/2 SHIP

This is basically straightforward, being a rounded triangular shape with a dome in the middle. Note the shading and light source I was prattling on about. Once I was happy with the design, I proceeded to copy the ship into the next vacant sprite using Chris Yates', 'Oh such bliss to use' sprite copier and proceeded to tilt the ship slightly on its side and



▶ **More blasting chuckles with *Slap 'n' Tickle***

adjust the shading accordingly.

This is really a process of trial and error as to what looks best. To give yourself an idea of how you're doing, press F1 to select the sprite and go back and forth between the two sprites you're animating. If it looks good enough, thumbs up – if not, try again. This process isn't as hard as it first seems with a bit of practice.

Anyway, I took my tilted ship and copied it to the next vacant sprite, mirrored it so that the ship was tilting the other way and adjusted the shading accordingly. Simple eh! The next task was to select EDIT OBJECTS, and put the Player 1 'ship on an even keel' sprite into the forward, backward and neutral directional slots. I then put the 'ship banks to the left' sprite in the left, and the 'ship banks right sprite' in the right – it's easy when you know how.

## TURRETS

The turrets are custom designed to sit on top of the towers – it's not just a fluke. The main thing with these was to create a long, smooth animation sequence that didn't use up too many sprites. The closing frames are the opening frames running backwards, and the spinning crossguns are merely three frames of a cross at different angles to give an appearance of rotation when animated. The turret is also held closed for a few frames in order to make the object seem more solid.

Incidentally, the Copta aliens use a similar technique of a sequence of frames repeated to give the impression of rotation, but the Copta has a four frame sequence.

## MOTHERSHIPS

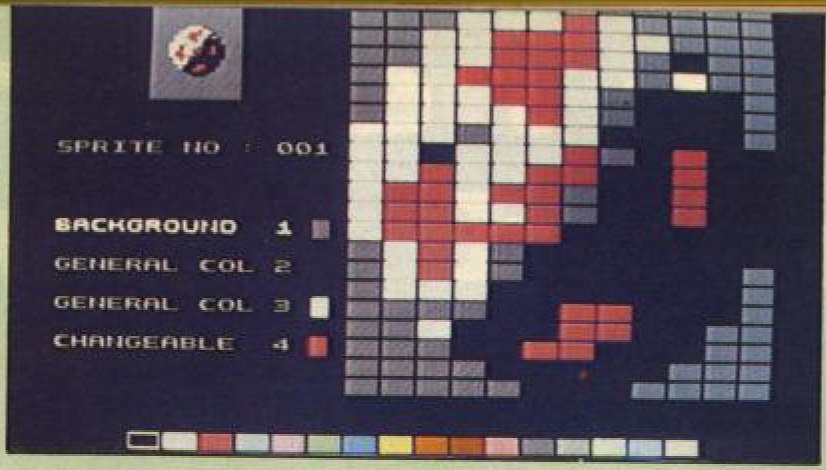
The Dragon and other Motherships are literally pieced together using JOIN ENEMIES. Each sprite was designed with careful attention to creating a clean join between neighbouring sprites in the finished alien. Again, for the Dragon's wings I simply copied and mirrored the sprites and adjusted the shading. Take note – this is a very useful timesaving technique.

The Strobes are just a circle made from different sized rings of the sprite colours, with colours switching positions to different rings, and animated to give the impression of rings constantly appearing, expanding and disappearing.

The Chessboard bullets use another simple technique of shrinking a shape accordingly. Also note the way the shadow animates with the bullet.

All the sprites except the Player Ship have shadows, and they're there in order to lift the sprite from the background. Obviously, the Player Ship is that much further from the ground, and the shadow would normally be cast that much further away from the vessel. This isn't possible to show with *SEUCK*, so a shadow was omitted.

For a game with many geometrically based enemies like *SEUCK*, a simple, logical, mathematical approach is often the best way to produce good




► **The superb sprite designer, editor, animator . . .**

animation sequences, but don't let an obsession for geometric accuracy overshadow your artistic eye.

And now – yes, yes, yes. It's . . .

## THE BACKGROUND

The background has three colours which must be used in every block, and one that may be varied. I wanted the *Slap 'n' Tickle* background to be quite soft, but still have some pronounced shading, and also some space scenes – so I chose black for space, and yellow and dark grey to create a soft, but still contrasting solid backdrop.

I constructed bits of the map with pathways, so that the tanks could run up and down them. To save tediously piecing together each block, I used COPY BLOCK mode and just edited the minor changes for pathways to each block afterwards. This technique is used a lot when defining blocks for a specific area of the map, such as the Chessboard.

Running out of blocks can be a problem, but things like outer space and the motorway are real savers – repetition can work with a little imagination.

One thing that was important with *Slap 'n' Tickle* was to make sure the still screens looked impressive, so the final screen of each level was given particular care in preparation.

## OBJECTS

Enter the EDIT OBJECTS menu, press 'E', and you can really get down to fine detailing the little nasties. There are many things of interest I could point out, but here are the juiciest bits of gossip I can think of.

By making the fire rate of an object equal to the animation speed, multiplied by the amount of frames in the animation sequence, it's possible to synchronise the firing of the object to the first frame of the animation sequence. What a mouthful! Examples of this are the turrets and the motorbike and armoured lorry on the motorway.

By giving the Mothership sections different firing directions and bullet objects, spectacular and hard-to-avoid firing effects are created painlessly. Try playing around with these.

Little touches can be added, such as the chess pieces requiring as many hits to kill as they are worth in pawns in a real game of chess, and creating turrets of different strengths so that the tough ones fire faster bullets more often and require more hits to kill. Oh – the list is endless . . .

## ATTACK WAVES

This is the make or break of the game – but watch out in case you run out of units. Economy is the key word – there are sections of the map in *Slap 'n' Tickle* which aren't used, largely because we had no attack wave space left to put aliens in these areas.

The ATTACK WAVE EDITOR is unbelievably easy to use. Paths were created for the tanks, and using the Attack Wave Editor I easily got them to follow them like the stupid sprites they are.

The Coptas on later levels take off from one starport and land on another, and the chess pieces move just like real chess pieces do. God, it's so good.

One technique to note with the Attack Wave Editor is to start an enemy's movement pattern beyond the perimeters of the screen, so it actually appears to scroll on with the landscape. However, the *Nemesis*-like space spinners are sometimes deliberately made to appear in the middle of the screen for an added element of surprise.

The Motherships are joined aliens. Simply take the first part of the ship and move it in the desired path. Watch you don't run out of flight path – I did many times. You can now construct the rest of the Motherships using JOIN ENEMY, and there is no need to put in a flight path – *SEUCK* will work it out automatically. Simple eh!!!

Basically, the secret of good attack waves is a lot of selecting and re-entering until you get it just right. A lot of game testing is advised at this point, and you may need to play around with the alien's firing rates and what have you.

## EDIT LEVELS

So now you've got a fantastic game with no noise! The only real sound of any note in *Slap 'n' Tickle* is the whirring at the beginning, which is in fact the continual sound of tanks firing. This sound effect has a very long decay, so it ends up looping into the next fire. The motorway noise is based on a similar principal, made up from the firing of all the vehicles plus the player start noise, which I am really proud of. When both players start at once you hear a chord. The same sound effect is used for both start sounds, but one is five semitones higher than the other. Musical – that's what we are here at Sensisoft!

The start and finish of levels are quite straightforward, but when you've come to the end of a level and wish to have a still screen, you have to redraw in order for the aliens to appear. Note the way that pieces of map can be missed out and other pieces, like the still screen with the freaky border and the Mothership, can be re-used without any hassle. Just slot it in wherever you fancy, and don't forget to loop at the end of your sequence of levels.

Also, check the timing of any still screen levels. I had to spend a little time adjusting the timing so that the screen moved onto the next level just after the Mothership had disappeared, as opposed to miles after it, or whilst it was still battling away.

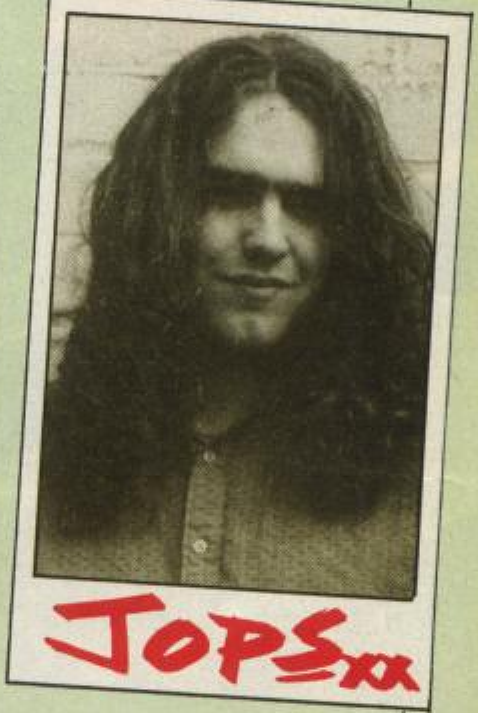
## PLAYER LIMITATIONS

Once you've finished your game, the final task is to decide how much help to give the player. How many bullets at one time, and how much of the screen can be navigated? I decided to be generous and give Players 1 and 2 loads of bullets and virtually the whole screen to play with. It's more fun that way after all.

## FRONT END

Yes! The really fun bit. I knocked up a naff character set, cracked loads of personal jokes, and bingo – a wild 'n' whacky front end. Who needs a scrolling message?

Remember, you can approach the *SEUCK* utilities in any order you want (within reason). There are no rules as to the perfect method, but a modicum of planning is needed or you could have a fabbo attack wave on a section of background that you've forgotten to actually include in the game. Got my drift? What a laugh eh! What a ruddy laugh! Ha! Ha! Ha! What a *SEUCKER* you are mate! Ha! He! He! Ho! Ho! Cor Blimey Guv'nor – what a Corker!!




**So that's *Slap 'n' Tickle* out of the way, but don't despair – Jops will be back from the psychiatrist in time for next month's spine-chilling installment of:** The Sensible Guide to Construction. **Be there – you know it makes Sense . . .**


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# ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES II

**In another fun-packed episode of thrills and spills, Julian Rignall and Daniel Gilbert experience the horrors of a 25 mile tailback along the M25, get caught in a traffic jam along the Hammersmith Road and spend half an hour finding a parking space on their way to the Associated Leisure Preview '88 – the last arcade show of 1987. The undynamic duo finally arrived, and this is what they saw . . .**



# ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES II.

# SUPER S

Arcadia, Mastertronic's arcade subsidiary company have just released the *Super Select System*, a multiplay arcade machine based around their Amiga board system. The system comes in two formats: Sports Simulation and Arcade Action, and each one boasts five different games – some new, and others which might just be recognised by 64 owners . . .

## SPORTS SIMULATION

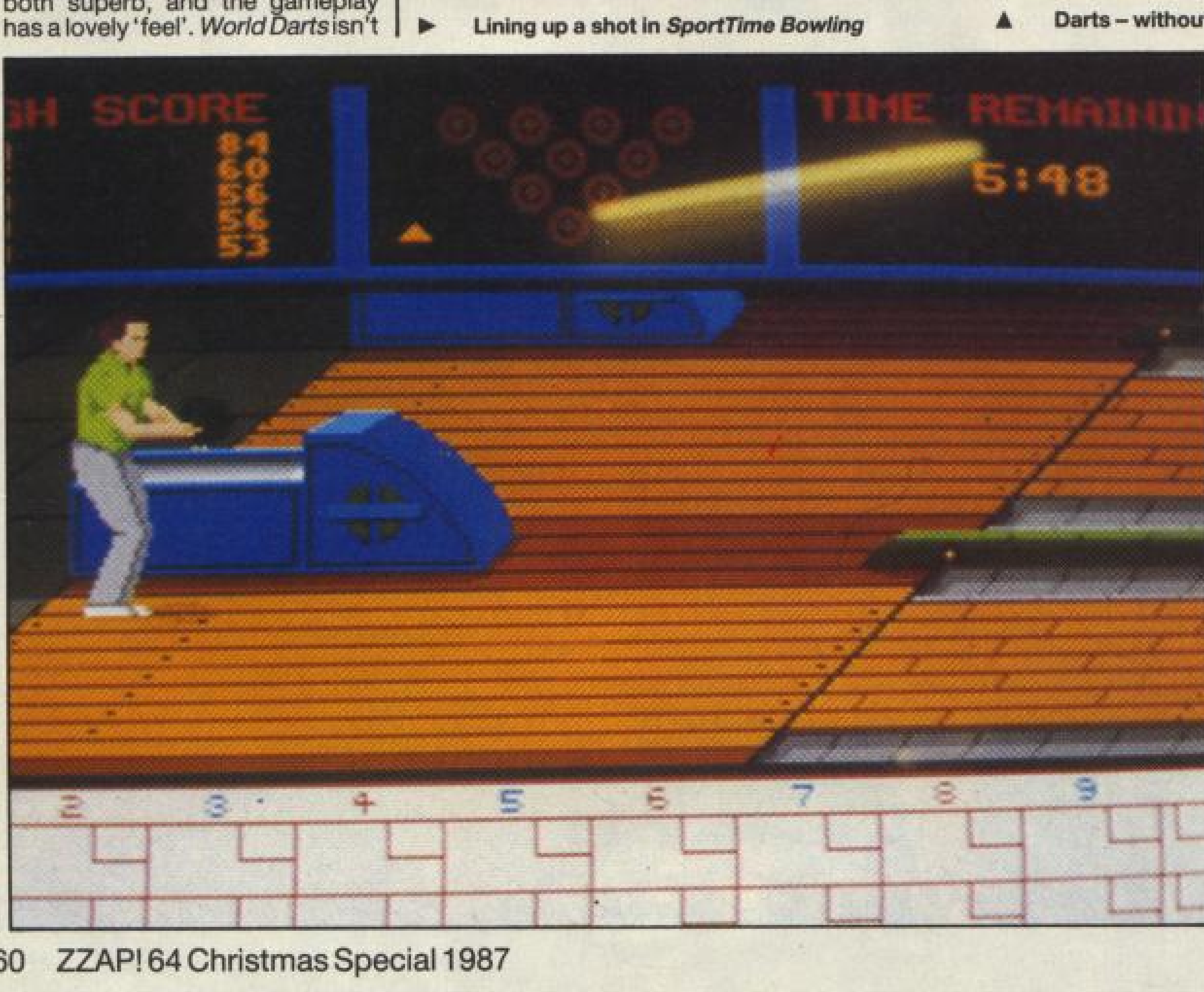
Like the *Arcade Action* package, *Sport Simulation* offers a wide variety of games, most of which have been converted from the home computer format.

One of the most notable conversions is *Arcade Leaderboard*, a slightly tweaked version of the classic Commodore golfing game which manages to retain all the original's playability. The course is played against a time limit, and trees, bunkers, rivers and lakes make the going extremely tough. There are extra features too, including sampled voices, an animated instruction screen and map of the course. It's certainly an unusual and very entertaining arcade game – go for a round.

The highly successful budget darts game, *180*, has been given the arcade treatment and renamed *World Darts*. The gameplay is virtually identical to the computer game, and the player challenges a series of increasingly adept computer opponents at a match of 501. The graphics and sound are both superb, and the gameplay has a lovely 'feel'. *World Darts* isn't the sort of game you'd expect to find in an arcade, but it's surprisingly addictive and well worth trying out.




▲ Darts – without the obesity, larger and cigarette smoke




► Lining up a shot in *SportTime Bowling*

*SportTime Bowling* is a very weak bowling simulation based on the dire *Strike* budget game. It doesn't play well and lacks the 'feel' so vital to capture the thrills of bowling. Even the graphics and sound are poor! Not one to break open a piggy bank for . . .

Offering more in the playability stakes, but still suffering from weak graphics is *SportTime Table Hockey*, a simulation of the one-on-one air hockey games often found in seaside arcades. The fast action is enjoyable at first, but it doesn't take long to lose its appeal.

Pool is a difficult game to convert to a video format, but Arcadia have managed to capture the game's feel and spirit with *Pool*. The ball movements are very realistic, and the game has a lovely 'feel'. *Pool* is definitely one of the best games of its type, and should be checked out.

Arcadia are also planning *Basketball, Football* and *Tennis* simulations especially for the *Super Select System* – we'll keep you posted.



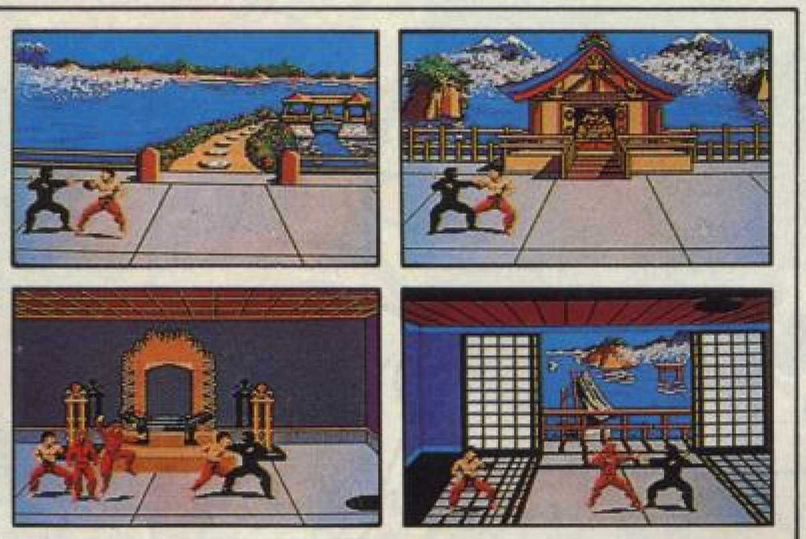
# SELECT SYSTEM ARCADE ACTION

The *Arcade Action* set-up offers five games, ranging from a traditional beat 'em up to an unusual future sport concept.

*Ninja Mission* is a conversion of the similarly named Commodore beat 'em up/arcade adventure. The player takes control of a Ninja hero and enters the evil Akuma's palace to retrieve seven stolen jade idols, a task which involves battling gangs of marauding guards.

The graphics are excellent, with lovely character animation, and some neat backdrops. It shouldn't take beat 'em up experts too long to complete the mission, but proves highly enjoyable nonetheless.

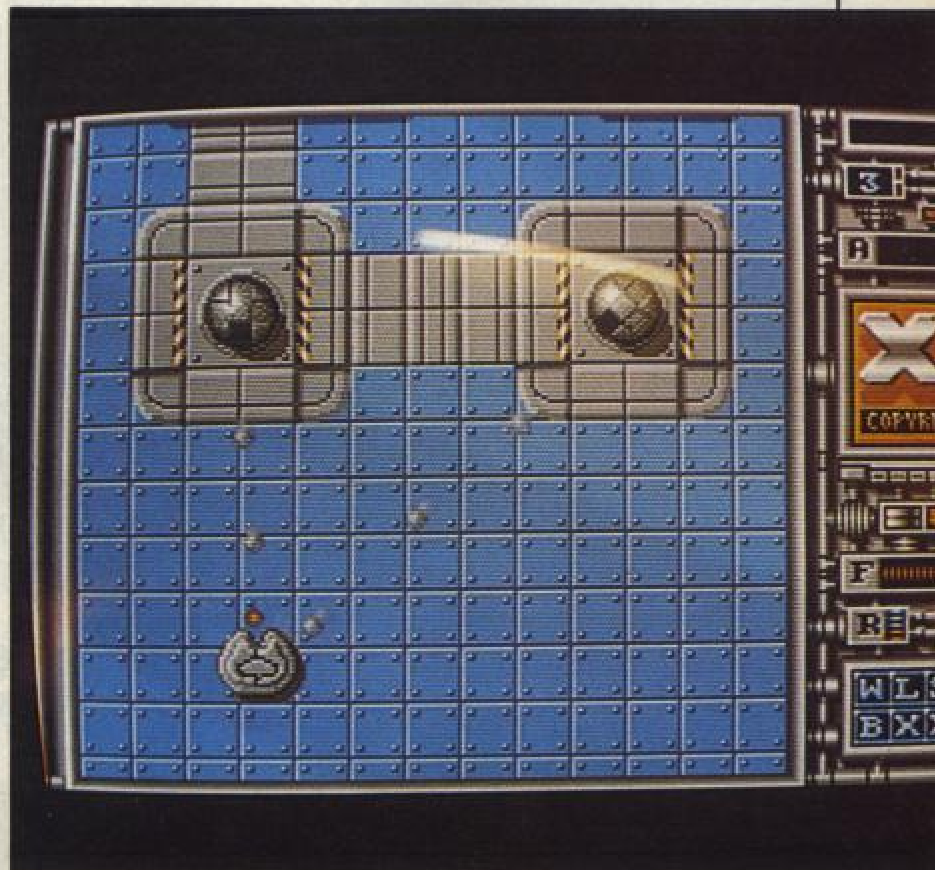
► **The Ninja fights his way through Akuma's palace**



► ***Xenon*'s fabulous bas-relief graphics are complemented by fast and furious action**



► **The first of many hazards *Xenon* has to offer**



*Blasta Ball* is based on the mildly addictive Commodore game, *Hyperbowl*. The scrolling action is viewed from above and involves taking control of a ship and driving a large moving puck into the opponents' goal. The concept is very simple, and unfortunately doesn't hit the mark as an arcade game. The graphics are colourful, but the gameplay just isn't addictive enough to spend more than a few ten pences on.

For shoot 'em up fans there's *Xenon*, a vertically scrolling 'progressive' blaster in which a craft capable of changing from tank to aircraft is guided through 16 sectors of frenetic action. As the mission progresses, extra weapons are collected to create a very impressive armoury. Each sector has its own particular guardian which is destroyed to progress to the next, and none give up without a fight!

The action is fast and furious and the graphics are really spectacular – especially some of the large aliens. *Xenon* is a very enjoyable and extremely addictive shoot 'em up and is well worth checking out.

The other two games on offer are *Space Ranger* and *Sidewinder*. The former is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up and the latter requires the player to pilot a craft through a 3D maze. Neither were ready at the show, but sound promising. ►



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# ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES II.

## ROCKFORD

First reported back in July, *Rockford*, the arcade version of the evergreen classic *Boulderdash* is now finished and ready to enter the arcades.

There are 40 levels set across ten different worlds, each having its own 'theme', with the dirt, boulders, diamonds, and even Rockford himself taking on a different appearance in each.

Both the graphics and sound are very disappointing, and the gameplay is very tough, requiring a very high degree of skill and an understanding of the game's workings. *Boulderdash* fans will doubtless find *Rockford* fun to play, but those unfamiliar with the computer version may find the action much too tough and unrewarding to be worth persevering with. Try it – you'll either love it or hate it.

▶ **Travel the never ending highway in *Road Wars***




## ROAD WARS

*Road Wars* is Arcadia's one-on-one 3D shoot 'em up in which one or two players drive 'battlespheres', futuristic tanks, up an infinitely long road and destroy oncoming hazards. The vehicles have two modes of operation: 'open' for blasting attackers, and 'closed' for smashing through obstacles unscathed.

The action is very simplistic, and there's little to do other than dodge or blast approaching objects. It doesn't take long for it to lose its appeal.

▶ **The gruesome twosome prepare to fight over an egg**



## AAARGH

One of Arcadia's new dedicated games is *Aaargh*, a mashing, smashing monster game in which one or two players assume the role of a pair of terrible monsters; Godzilla, and a giant Cyclops, and go on the rampage through a series of towns and cities. The action is displayed in 3D, with the monsters able to walk 'in' and 'out' of the screen.

The first port of call is a tribal village, and the gruesome twosome stride around the village, smashing down houses and setting them alight. As buildings are wrecked, the inhabitants stream out and are either stomped to death, or picked up and eaten – very enjoyable!

Beneath one of the houses is an egg, which is revealed only when the building is razed to the ground. If the egg is picked up, both players get the chance to increase their score in a bonus stage. The monsters face one another and fight – the winner claiming the egg and a large points bonus. After this violent interlude, both creatures return to stomp and smash the next location. Later stages include Egypt, the Wild Frontier, China and a Greek temple.

The destructive gameplay is straightforward, but extremely absorbing, and the highly detailed graphics and superb sound effects enhance the action immensely. *Aaargh* is one of the best arcade releases in months, and is well worth hunting down. ▶

# ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES II.



▶ Incredibly fast graphics are all part and parcel of *Afterburner*

## AFTERBURNER



▶ The plane rendezvous with a bomber for mid air refuelling

Sega, makers of *Super Hang-On* and *Out Run*, have just released their most impressive looking game yet – *After Burner*, an aerial combat simulation. The player takes control of a high-powered jet and flies over 23 stages in an attempt to destroy as many enemy planes and installations as possible.

The game comes in three formats, two sit-ins and a stand-up cabinet, complete with flashing lights. The most expensive of the sit-ins is very impressive, and rocks and rolls as the plane banks and moves. The cheaper version tilts left and right only.

The first thing that strikes the player are the colourful and incredibly fast graphics – possibly the fastest 3D yet seen! The ground rushes by beneath at an awesome speed and enemy planes zoom in from the distance at an alarming rate. The fighter is armed with a limited supply of machine gun shells and homing missiles, which are constantly released to ensure survival.

If the plane is going fast enough and the joystick is wrenched left or right, the plane rolls and the entire screen spins in a very disconcerting manner. Occasionally enemy planes and homing missiles close in from behind, and this is where the 'after burner' throttle comes into play. Pulling this back sends the plane roaring off at a tremendous speed, hopefully losing the pursuers in the process. At regular intervals a large bomber flies over and the plane is automatically refuelled and re-armed in mid air.

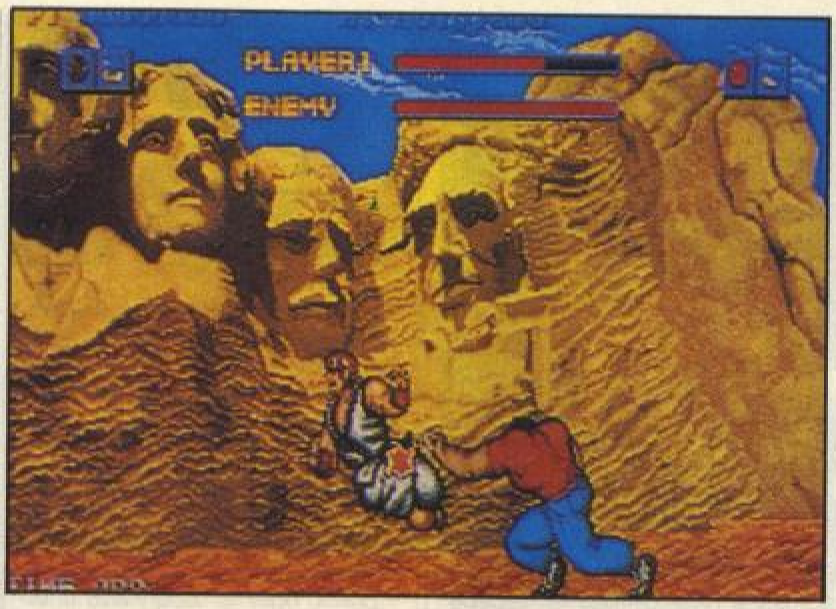
There are also two allied airfields which are landed on to give the shattered pilot a welcome break from the frantic action. By the way, if you look very carefully when the plane lands on the first strip, a *Hang-On* bike comes out of the trees and races up the first airstrip as the plane takes off. On the second strip, the Ferrari from *Out Run* makes an appearance!

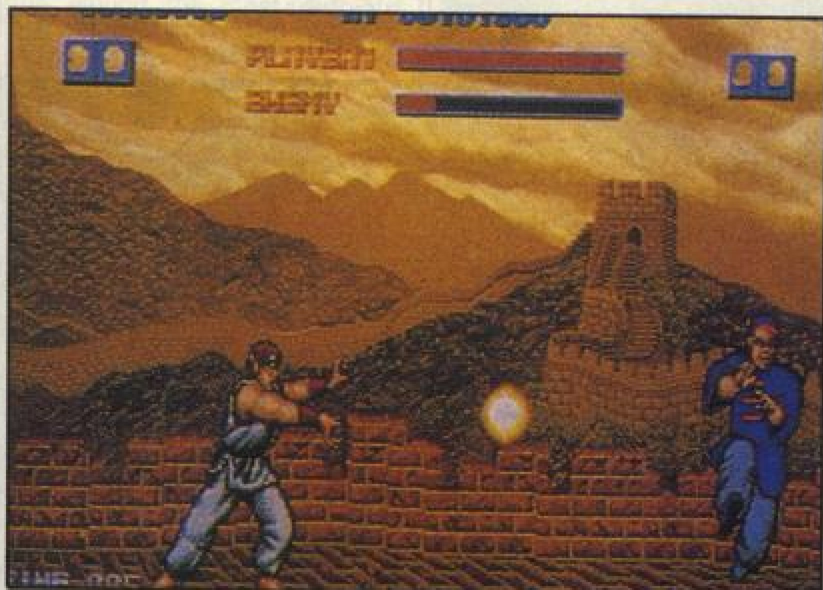
All this is very impressive, but unfortunately the playability is exceptionally poor. The plane doesn't handle very well, and the feedback from joystick isn't at all good. Waggling the joystick from right to left is a good tactic to avoid oncomers, and pressing the afterburners when being chased is about all there is to it. It doesn't take much practice to complete the game, and the ending is pitiful – the plane lands and a few poorly drawn screens are displayed.

Many arcades are charging upwards of 50p for just one go, which is vastly overpriced. The game may be very impressive to look at, but it's not very enjoyable to play.



▶ Take out that camp!

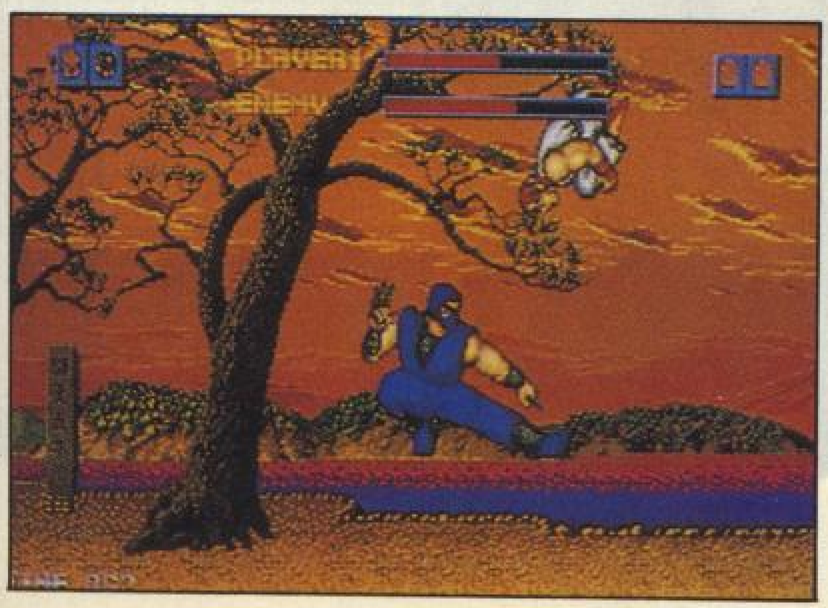


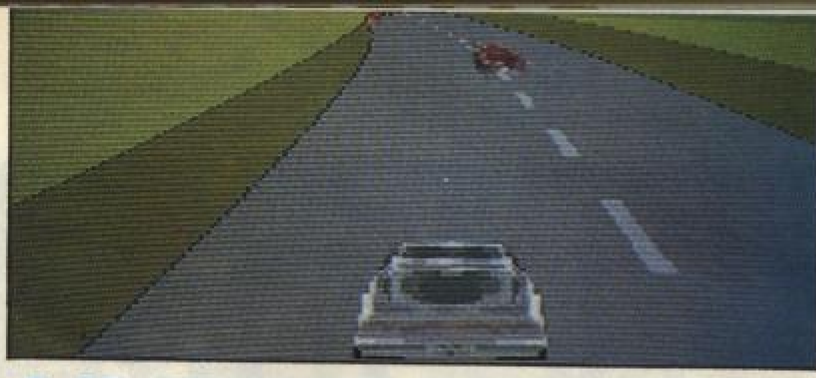




# STREET FIGHTER

Capcom's latest is a traditional one or two player beat 'em up played across a series of backdrops, very much in the *Karate Champ* mould. However, it adds a new dimension with pneumatic 'punch buttons', large rubber pads that are bashed to make the on-screen fighter punch out – and the harder they're thumped, the more powerful the hit.

The action is certainly gratifying, with great feedback from the buttons, but once the novelty of hitting the machine wears off, there's very little in the gameplay to draw you back.



# HYPER CRASH

Although Konami's new racing destruction game, *Hyper Crash* looks totally awful, it's enjoyable to play. The objective is to race around five hazard-filled courses within the allotted time limit. Opponents are disposed of by bumping them as hard as possible into the track walls or an oncoming obstacle. The car is also capable of somersaulting if top speed is reached, and enemy cars are squashed with a well-aimed flip.

The graphics are very blocky and look incredibly primitive when compared with the likes of *WEC Le Mans* and *Out Run*, but the destructive nature of the gameplay makes it great fun. It's a little on the easy side, and shouldn't take too long to complete, but *Hyper Crash* is entertaining and worth feeding a few 10 pences into.

► **Although the graphics are incredibly simplistic – *Hyper Crash* is fun to play**







► **With 27 different weapons, *Exzisus* is the most 'progressive' blaster to date**

# EXZISUS

Konami's new shoot 'em up is very much in the *Side Arms* mould, but takes 'progressive' weaponry a few steps further. The player guides a jet-packed soldier across a hostile landscape and blasts all and sundry. Up to 27 extra weapons are picked up by shooting alien pods and collecting the letters therein, and a fully-armed soldier is an awesome sight.

Although *Exzisus* is a very straightforward no-frills blaster, it's extremely playable and keeps you feeling for loose change.

# ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES II.

# BLACK TIGER

*Black Tiger* is a version of Capcom's much-cloned *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*.

The player takes the role of fighter Black Tiger and travels across a hazard-filled landscape in search of fame and fortune. Every step of the way is fraught with danger, and vile creatures attack constantly. Pots are encountered along the way and are broken to reveal extra points or weapons to help Black progress further.

*Black Tiger* is tough and challenging, but hasn't anything new to offer. Try it out if you're a *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* fan . . .

▶ ***Black Tiger* – a challenging *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* clone**



# DEVIL WORLD

▶ ***Devil World*'s introduction screen is very reminiscent of Indiana Jones**



▶ **The intrepid *Devil World* explorers discover a village**




*Gauntlet* has spawned many clones, but Konami's *Devil World* takes the genre a few steps further. It's a one or two player game in which a hero and heroine explore a lost world filled with monsters, hazards and traps.

The action is displayed from a forced perspective viewpoint, and each player travels the landscape picking up items of treasure and shooting attackers. When an object is picked up, one of the icons at the bottom of the screen becomes highlighted, and is selected to give the player extra weapons, including a shot gun, bazooka and laser rifle.

As the action progresses, the landscape and attackers become increasingly ferocious, and later stages require the players to cross perilous bridges, make a stand against marauding hordes of violent reptilians and tackle a giant mud monster. The going is certainly tough, but with the extra weaponry it's possible to blast all and sundry – a great feeling.

*Devil World* is easy to get into, and the violent blasting action is very satisfying indeed.

# FAST LANE

Remember an old black and white game called *Head On*? It first appeared in 1978 and required the player to guide a stick car around a very simple maze and pick up dots while avoiding oncoming cars. Now Konami have taken the idea, added some snazzy graphics and wonderful sampled music and come up with *Fast Lane*.

In the new version, the stick car has become a Ferrari, the oncoming vehicle is a kamikaze off-road buggy, and the dots are girls who run around the maze and are 'picked up' when run into. The maze layout varies from screen to screen, and as play progresses, glowing orbs appear and are collected to add a feature to the Ferrari – such as firepower, extra speed or bombs – which are used to despatch the opposing car.

*Fast Lane* is a very appealing game, mostly due to its simplicity, and is worth trying out.

▶ **Ever wanted to drive a Ferrari?**










▶ **Snazzy graphics and sound belie *Fast Lane*'s simplicity**




▶ **The *Fast Lane* – just the place to pick up girls . . .**



# ATTACK!

Piranha



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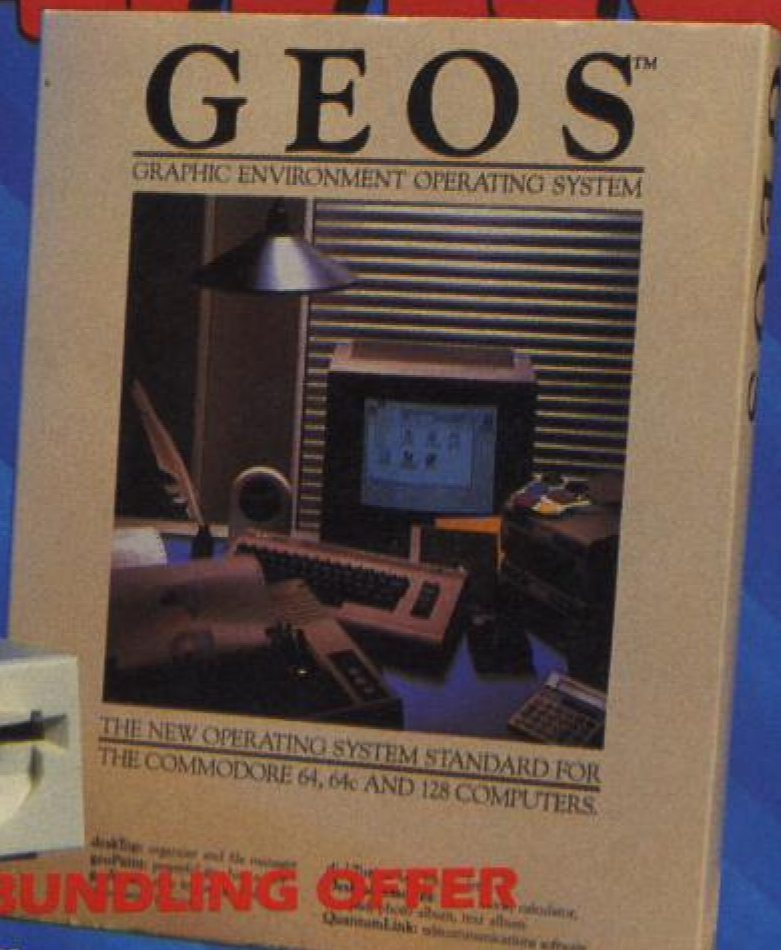
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For release schedules, please contact Helen Holland at the address below. Piranha games are available from all good stockists or, in case of difficulty, direct from Helen Holland, Piranha, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3FL. Tel: 01-836 6633.

Piranha

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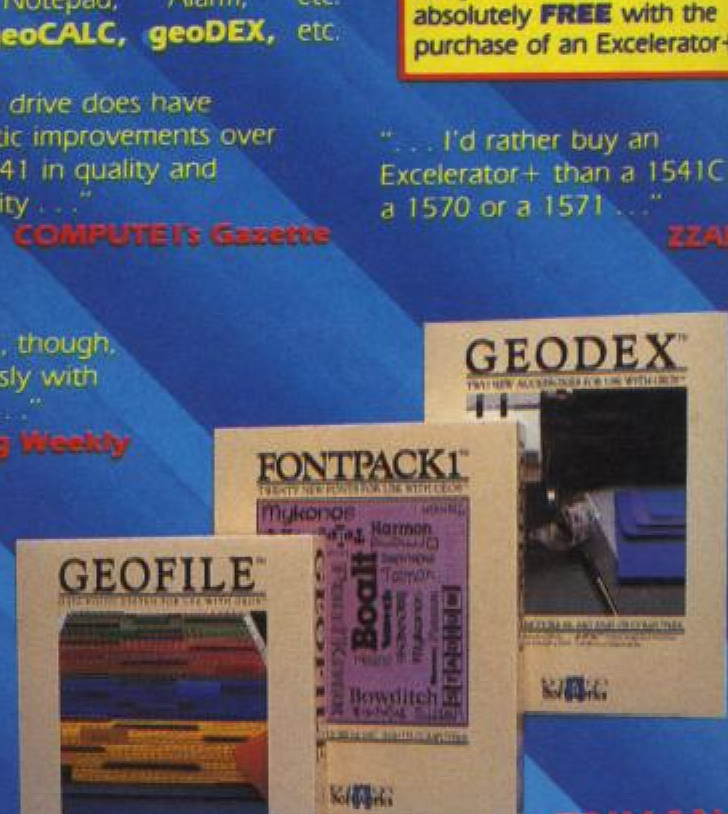
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# ZZAP! STICK! Joystick Reviews

# THE WINTER COLLECTION

Each joystick is rated with a special marking scheme, which accurately reflects the results of a series of tests, and our opinions in general.

To present a fair standard of comparison, all the sticks are put through their paces on a rapid-fire, precision shoot 'em up, *Zynaps*; a pixel-perfect platform game, *Nebulus*; a hot-handed waggler, *Decathlon*, and an eight-directional beat 'em up, *International Karate +*. The games represent the toughest requirements a joystick should ever have to be put through, and enable a fair overall mark to be arrived at.

We also take into account the design – how comfortable is the joystick in play? It's all very well having a responsive, durable joystick, but if it's awkward to use . . .

Well, there you have it. If a joystick stands this much punishment from a ZZAP! reviewer, it's sure to serve you well.

**If your faithful old joystick is past its prime, now is a good time to purchase a new one, what with all that Christmas cash just lying around in envelopes. But – which one?**

## SUNCOM TAC-5

**Supplier:** MicroProse Ltd, 2 market Place, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8DA. Tel (0666) 54326
**Price:** £13.99



Following on from Suncom's Tac 2 and 3 joysticks is the Tac 5, the latest in the Tactile Audible Controller range. The light beige and grey stick features a shaft-mounted thumb button and two base buttons.

The microswitches must be the loudest ever used in a joystick (hence the name), and while this is a good indication of a clear signal, it becomes a positive nuisance in frantic play. The base buttons are in fact part of the same piece of plastic, and make contact with a small microswitch, while the top fire button is a tiny sealed switch, depressed directly.

The stick is quite responsive in use, giving good diagonals, but the travel from switch to switch reduces its precision and the main shaft also swivels slightly, making it feel very loose.

The large case is a bit bulky and lacks a means of securing to a surface. The long stick makes it 'top-heavy' in play and tends to flop from side to side unless firmly grasped – a difficult task at the best of times.

**Responsiveness: Stick 71%**
Great for finding diagonals but the stick travel is too long and lacks a decent feedback.
**Responsiveness: Button 55%**
Base buttons are quite firm and responsive, but the silent stick button is less positive.
**Ergonomics 25%**
Unstable on a surface, and uncomfortable to hold due to chunky casing.
**Durability 98%**
Brilliant – the tough case and high-quality switches should see years of active service.
**Value For Money 60%**
A touch expensive compared to the competition.
**Overall 68%**
Firm, tactile and effective, but ultimately unimpressive.

# ZZAP! STICK! Joystick Reviews

## TERMINATOR

**Supplier:** Robtek, Unit 4, Isleworth business Complex, St Johns Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 6NL. Tel (01) 847 4457
**Price:** £19.95



Definitely one for the macho games player, the *Terminator* comes in the shape of a hand grenade, with the stick positioned at the top, and the fire button located on the side. Firing is accomplished by pressing the fake belt clip, which may alternatively be removed by pulling the 'pin' out.

In use, the stick proves to be pretty effective, being precise and responsive – although rather inadequate for wagglers such as *Decathlon* due to the lack of grip.

The main gripe with the *Terminator* is the position of the fire button: it's difficult to hold the grenade securely AND rapidly press the fire button at the same time. *Nebulus* is negotiated well, but *Zynaps* is its Achilles' heel, with the fast action and precision flying proving a little too much for the uncomfortable firing position.

**Responsiveness: Stick 92%**
Overlapping microswitches allow diagonals to be easily obtained. Firm in handling and generally effective.

**Responsiveness: Button 87%**
Best use in finger contact, regarding the intermediate 'clip'.

**Ergonomics 48%**
Great to hold in the hand – but pretty awful to actually use.

**Durability 97%**
Practically unbreakable – the plastic case is incredibly tough, although the metal stick and 'clip' are prone to rusting!

**Value For Money 42%**
Very expensive as an everyday joystick – pose value only.

**Overall 55%**
Great internals but ultimately difficult to use.

## CRUISER

**Supplier:** (Trade enquiries only) Leisuresoft Ltd, Unit 2 Rothersthorpe Avenue Trading Estate, Northampton NN4 9JN. Tel (0604) 768711
**Price:** £9.99



The unusual styling of this blue joystick makes it a good runner in the aesthetic stakes, and there are four strong suckers positioned on its underside to attach it securely to a smooth surface.

The stick is original in that it has an adjustable three position 'torque' collar at the base of the shaft, allowing the user to alter the amount of effort needed to move the stick. In most cases, the middle torque proves to be adequate, although the option for adjustment still remains. Again, signals are made via microswitches, and although the plastic collar creaks and groans with increased effort, the stick remains quite precise.

The two white fire buttons are connected to a piece of plastic, which swivels to connect with a microswitch. Although it's not the best system in the world (the buttons tend to feel a bit spongy), they respond quite well and are good for manual rapid fire.

**Responsiveness: Stick 87%**
Good: the lowest torque is good for waggling, the middle setting for platforms, while the highest torque requires too much effort on the player's behalf.

**Responsiveness: Button 83%**
Appears a little sloppy, but a positive 'click' reassures.

**Ergonomics 79%**
Slightly unwieldy in handling, but great when securely suckered to a smooth surface.

**Durability 87%**
The tough plastic case and stick have a lasting feel, but the firing system might become suspect after a while.

**Value For Money 90%**
One of the least expensive around, and a good stick to boot.

**Overall 90%**
Unusual, cheap and extremely effective.

## EUROMAX MICRO-HANDLER MULTI-FUNCTION JOYSTICK

**Supplier:** Euromax Electronics Ltd, Bessingby Industrial Estate, Bridlington, North humberside YO16 4SJ. Tel (0262) 601006/602541
**Price:** £24.95

The *Micro-handler Multi-function* presents quite a complete package for a gamester, and provides joystick and fire button, autofire on/off with adjustable rate of fire, and two paddles with separate fire button, complete in a metal casing. The box is obviously not meant to be hand-held and has four large suckers underneath to anchor the whole thing to a suitable surface.

The joystick itself has a metal shaft with a tough plastic ball screwed onto the top. The base of the shaft sits in an eight position 'yolk' (like a gear selector) which allows diagonals to be found and kept with ease. Unfortunately, the travel from switch to switch is quite far, making the stick feel and act rather loose.

The layout of the controls is rather poor since the corners of the box dig into the hands, which tend to be rested along the sides of the case. The controls are also a little too close together, making the whole system feel cramped and cluttered, and when the stick is waggled, the hand comes into contact with the metal paddle controls.

In use, both joystick and paddles perform well. The stick is fine for most games, and brilliant for *Decathlon*. The paddles were tested on *Arkanoid* and react smoothly and precisely. The main let-down are the fire buttons, which tend to stick and feel far from smooth in operation. Unless depressed in the exact centre, both buttons tilt slightly and become stuck on the walls of the collar surrounding them.

The *Micro-handler* is an unusual system, and although not the apex in controls, proves adequate for most things. A touch too expensive to represent a serious proposition, though.

**Responsiveness: Stick 80%**
Superbly tactile, but spoilt by a long stick travel.
**Responsiveness: Button 55%**
Feels slightly unsure in use, and the buttons sometimes stick if not depressed exactly in the centre.
**Ergonomics 39%**
Poorly designed and cramped controls, and unsuitable for anything more than table-top usage.
**Durability 95%**
All-metal construction and tough plastic parts should provide a lasting investment.
**Value For Money 47%**
Expensive for what you get. Separate paddles – although rare – don't cost the earth and are infrequently used on 64 games anyway.
**Overall 73%**
A nice package which looks impressive, performs well, but is far from a necessity.




## CHEETAH 125 SPECIAL

**Supplier:** Cheetah Marketing, Norbury House, Norbury Road, Fairwater, Cardiff CF5 3AS. Tel (0222) 555525
**Price:** £12.99

This smart black and red joystick from Cheetah attempts to fill a gap left open by games such as *Green beret*, *Slap Fight* and *Nemesis* which rely on the space bar to activate secondary functions or select extra weapons. The *125 Special* has two leads which are plugged into both ports at the same time. Flicking a switch from 'Normal' to 'Special' allows the top fire button to be used as the space bar, while either of the base buttons or stick trigger are used to fire. These four buttons may also be individually assigned to operate different game functions when prompted to redefine the keys used. The shaft also rotates slightly, initiating a second pair of switches separate from the four directional ones. Software is to be made available that uses this function, and would allow the player, for instance, to direct a tank and rotate the turret at the same time. None is available at present, however.

The 125's internals are somewhat lacking, with leaf switches for the main joystick commands and thumb and trigger buttons, and small contact switches for the base buttons. The four directional leaf springs are poor for obtaining diagonals, and the silent stick buttons have very little positive feedback in use.

The joystick has a rapid fire on/off button, and has four sturdy suckers at its base.

**Responsiveness: Stick 68%**
Poor diagonals, and generally sloppy feel.
**Responsiveness: Button 58%**
'Clickless' stick buttons are uncertain in use and the base buttons have a long travel and remain merely adequate.
**Ergonomics 80%**
Comfortable when secured to the table top, but cramp-inducing when hand-held for long periods of play.
**Durability 79%**
Sturdy case but the leaf springs and poor fire button switches are liable to a short life-span.
**Value For Money 68%**
Cheap for what's on offer.
**Overall 67%**
Reasonably effective in use, but lacking the feel of a quality product.



## COMPETITION PRO 5000 (CLEAR CASE)

**Supplier:** Dynamics Marketing Ltd, Coin House, New Coin Street, Royton, Oldham OL2 6JZ. Tel (061) 626 7222
**Price:** £15.95

Very much an old favourite, (rated 97% Overall in an Issue 6 ZZAPSTICK! feature) the *Competition Pro* features a sturdy case and four arcade quality microswitches on the stick. Euromax' latest addition to the *Competition* family is a clear case version of the Pro, which allows the more inquisitive games player to see what's going on – and also see what has gone wrong should it fail to deliver the goods.

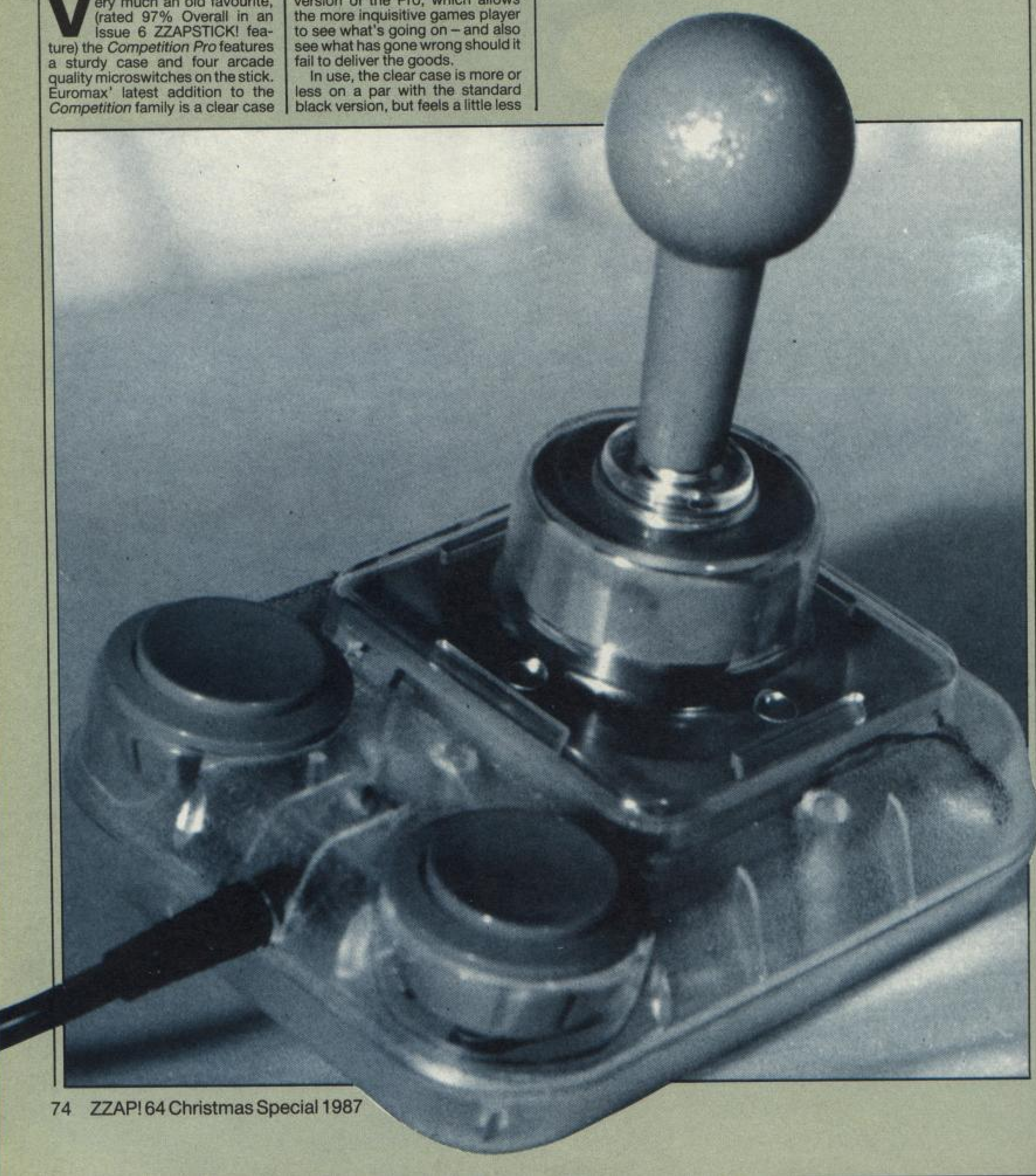
In use, the clear case is more or less on a par with the standard black version, but feels a little less 'tight'. It proves worthwhile in most cases, but the distance between switches means that diagonals are its weakest point – most evident while playing *International Karate +*.

The fire buttons lack a definite 'click', and are a bit on the loose side. Still, they prove effective when a rapid fire rate is required, and are well above average for most needs.

This clear case version of the *Pro* is more or less comparable with the standard. It's slightly less sturdy, and for an extra quid offers little more than pose value.

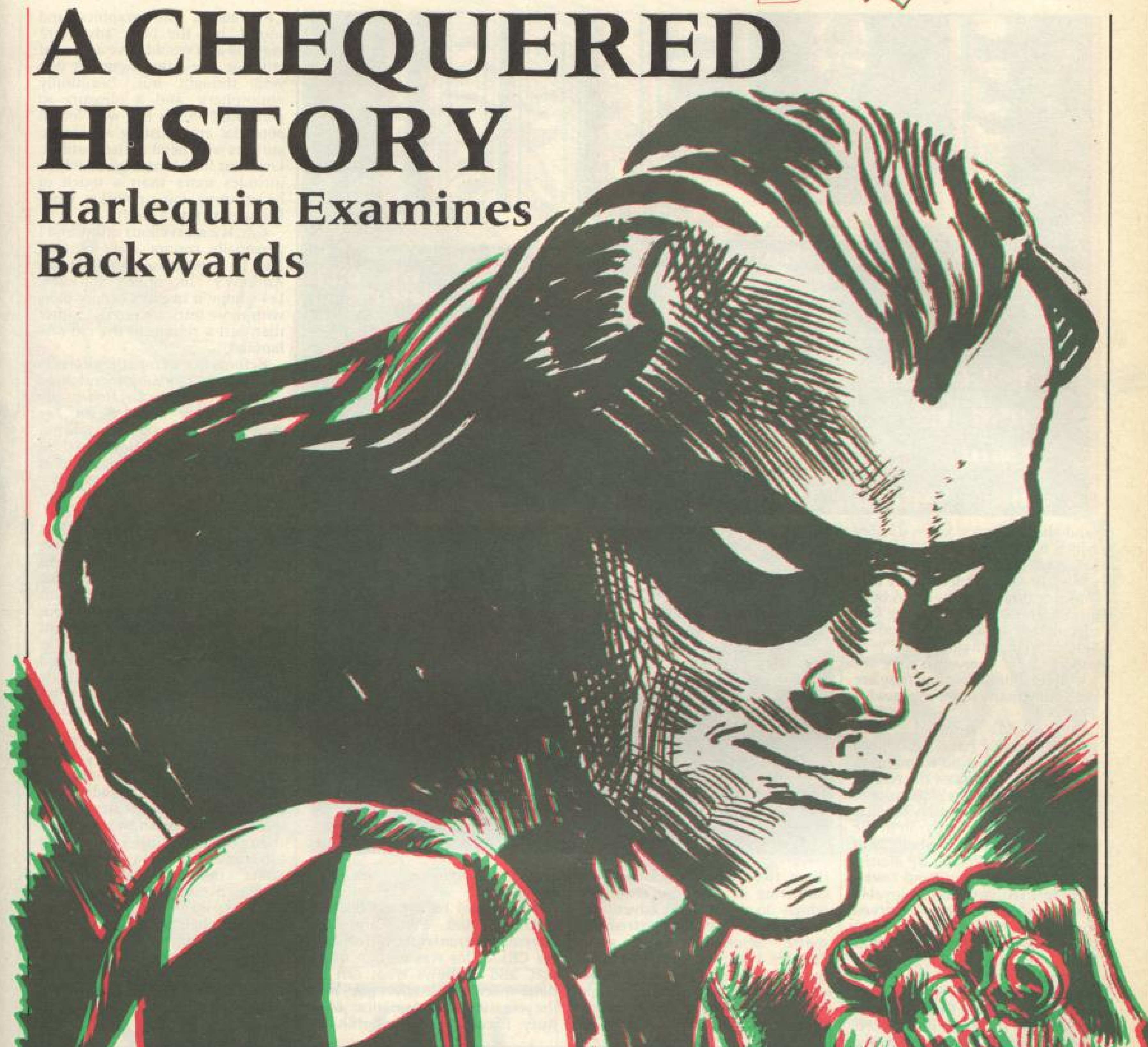
NOTE: A clear case with autofire and slow mode should be available shortly, retailing at £16.49.

**Responsiveness: Stick 91%**
Finding diagonals is its weakest point – otherwise excellent.
**Responsiveness: Button 88%**
Slack, but otherwise great.
**Ergonomics 83%**
Easy to hold firmly on a table-top, and reasonably comfortable when lap-held. The button layout allows left and right-handed play.
**Durability 81%**
Internals should last well in normal use, but the transparent plastic is brittle and very easily shattered – not to be used to vent anger.
**Value For Money 80%**
Offers little over the standard Pro, but has a high novelty value.
**Overall 94%**
A good-looking and generally competent stick.



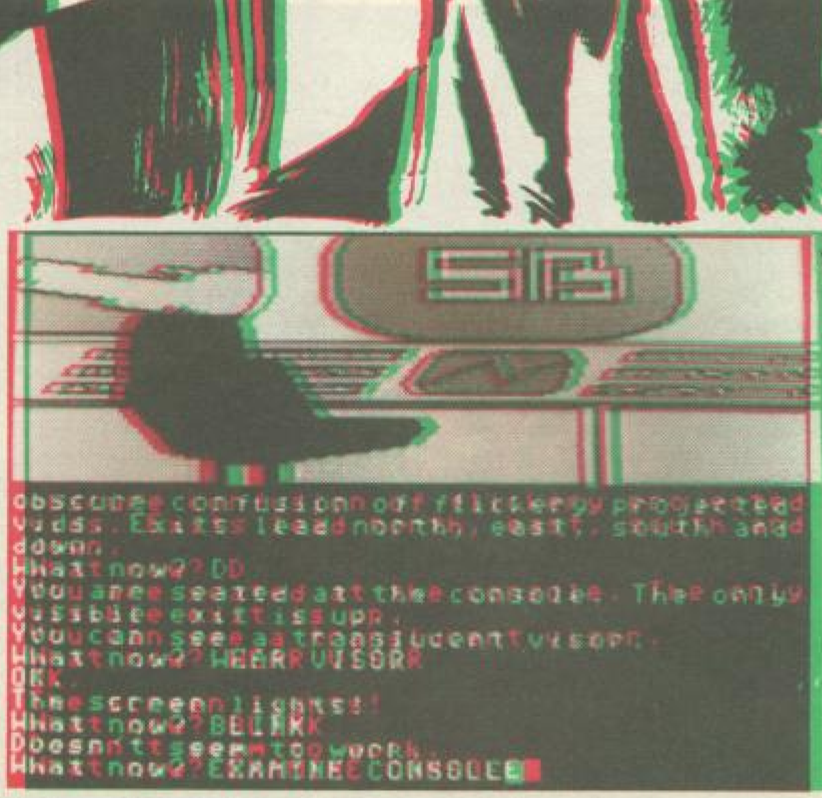
# A CHEQUERED HISTORY

## Harlequin Examines Backwards



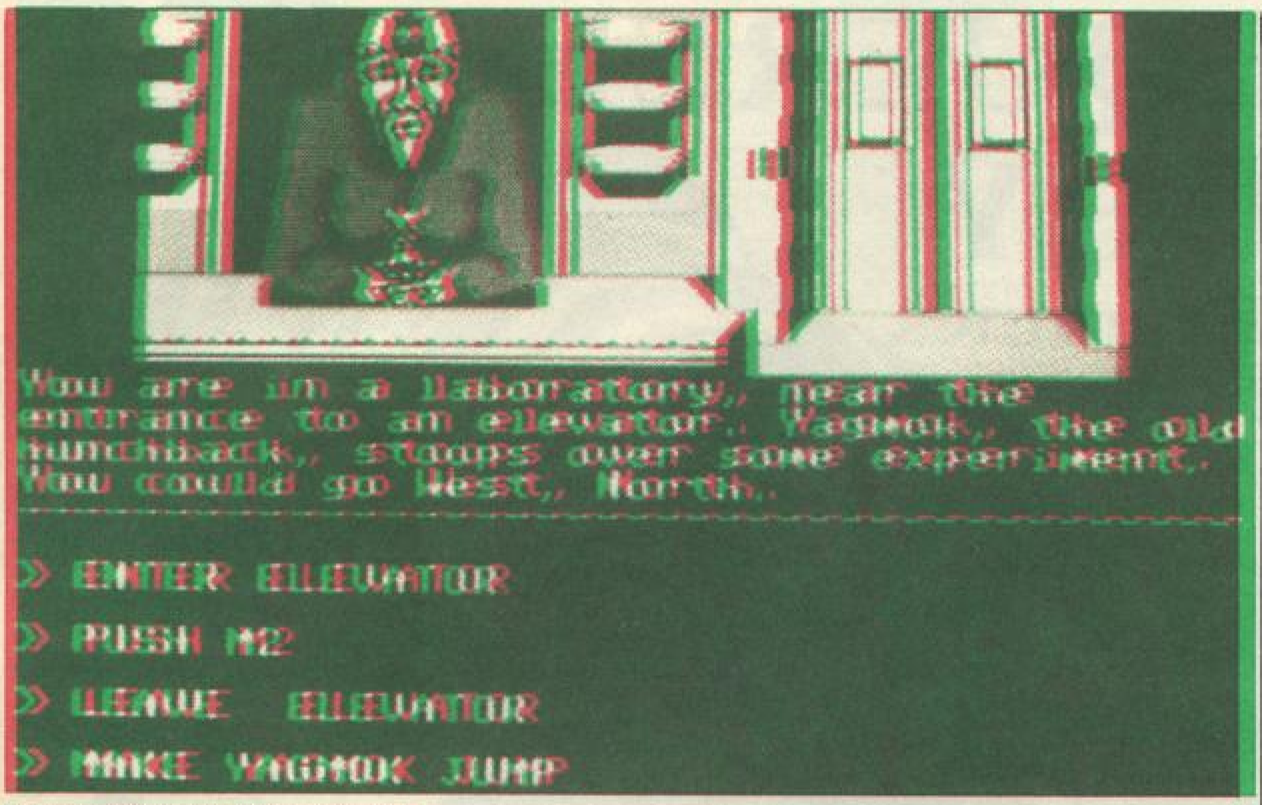


One could hardly say that 1987 has been an inspiring year for adventure games. There has been a steady trickle of Infocom games, hardly a spark for those without a disk drive however. *Ballyhoo* and *Nord And Bert* may not be among Infocom's best, but it is good to have at least one company which is adventure dedicated. *Lurking Horror* and *Plundered Hearts* are two which I'm sure will rate as classics.




I realise now that I've probably upset Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 but let's count how many adventures they have released this year . . . Magnetic Scrolls one (not counting *Jinxster* which I haven't played yet), Level 9 three ▶






(and that includes *Silicon Dreams* which is a redraft of the *Snowball* trilogy). Not very impressive really, not when you consider that Infocom can generally yield both quality and quantity. Having said that the Austins and Anita Sinclair's company do create very good games . . . even if they are few and far between, and they are promising many more releases for 1988.

US Gold coupled with Adventuresoft have produced quite a nice selection throughout the year. February saw the release of *Kayleth* (a personal favourite of mine as it quite accurately predicts what will happen on Zyron in the very near future!) which was subsequently followed by *Masters Of The Universe* in April and *Temple Of Terror* in August, both enjoyable games which I feel deserved somewhat higher marks than those awarded by my predecessor. They all included attractive graphics (which did add something to the game atmosphere), more than adequate parsers and plenty to do and see. They provided adventurers with a challenge even if the gameplay itself was sometimes a touch iffy.

1987 has been the year of the *GAC*, good old Incentive's creation which has allowed so called adventure authors to input away GETTING ALL, EXAMINEing 'it' and scribbling infantile pictures. The finished product may then be sold, usually for extortionate prices, via established software houses, to the unsuspecting public. This is not *GAC*'s fault by any means, it's simply the authors' lack of thought, effort and imagination put into the adventures in the first place.

March gave us the first release on Incentive's Medallion label, *Apache Gold* and *Winter Wonderland* (£7.95 each!!), which, to be fair, were not dire by any means, although they tried very hard to be. *Zodiac* coupled with *The Secret Of Life* came my way in December;




these two were also fairly bad consisting of all those elements which do not a good adventure make; sudden deaths, extremely sparse descriptions and poor pictures. I refuse to drone on but I must just add that I cannot see the point of including puny graphics in a game when the memory available is only just sufficient to create a decent text-only adventure.

This would be a good time to mention Rod Pike and his adventure *Frankenstein* (released via CRL). This was written using *GAC* and it shows what can be done when a little effort goes into the creation or adaptation of a story. I realize that the boffins at CRL added the graphics and sound, but the basic adventure was still as it would have appeared without any adjustments. It was well thought out, beautifully atmospheric and a pleasure to play. Rod shows the way for all potential and existing adventure authors who need to use a utility. Look out for his next game which includes more than a touch of lycanthropy (an upmarket word for turning into a wolf).

*GAC* is a marvellous utility and I personally cannot wait for *GAC Plus* to materialise from Mr Ian Andrew's Incentive Software. Let's hope it inspires deeper plots with more intricate puzzles rather than just a rehash of the old and familiar.

Before I leave I must just depress you a little more by mentioning *The Shadows Of Mordor*! How many of you were weaned on *The Hobbit*? Who among you could not wait for Melbourne House to thrill us again with their adaptation of Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings*? How many of you were disappointed . . . yes, so was I. Then in July of this year came Part 2, *The Shadows Of Mordor*. Surely this had to be a great improvement on Part 1: there is no way that Melbourne House could let this one reach the shops without ensuring its gameplay and content were at least on a par with *The Hobbit*. We all rushed out and bought a copy (yes I did!), eagerly loaded the thing and away we went . . . perhaps Part 3 will be good!

Next year must be better. There will probably not be any more adventure houses around than there are now but the productivity of each one will be greater than in 1987. Level 9 have now completed their Kaos writing system and have many games in the pipeline, Anita (Magnetic Scrolls) has promised more releases in 1988 and I'm sure Infocom will at least maintain their present output. All in all, there may not be many more authors next year, but at least we shall be getting the best that's available from the people who are masters of their art.





# KNIGHT ORC

**Level 9 disk £14.95 cassette £14.95.**

I have been programmed to believe that all Orcs are nasty, vile creatures, so the opportunity to take the role of one and find out for myself seemed interesting to say the least.

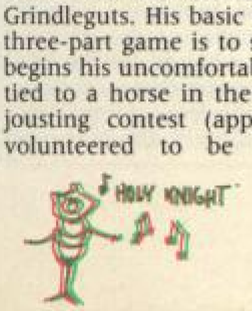
The particular creature that Level 9's *Knight Orc*, allows the player to become is apparently two rungs down the ladder from a tape worm and answers to the name Grindleguts. His basic task in this three-part game is to survive. He begins his uncomfortable journey tied to a horse in the midst of a jousting contest (apparently he volunteered to be the Orcs' champion whilst in a drunken stupor and is now paying the price). Obviously his very first task is get out of this contest and make it back to Orc Mountain in one piece. Actually finding a way across a broken viaduct is the main aim of part one; hardly a difficult quest, it's designed to get the player used to how the game works and what actions are possible within it. Parts two and three are much more involved and require the utilisation of everything learned in part one if the player is to get anywhere at all.

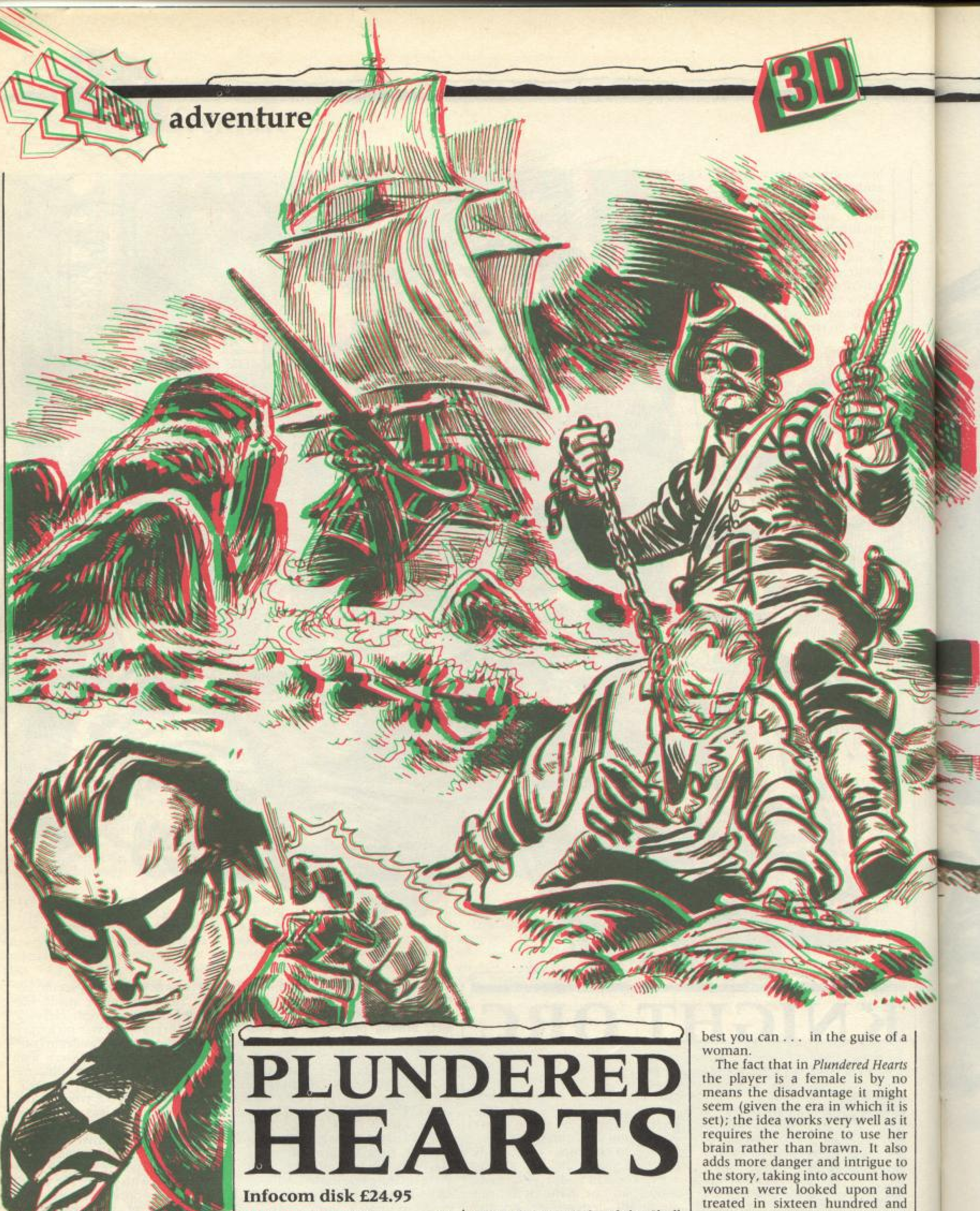
Using their Kaos writing system, Level 9 have provided the facility for the player to use 'High Level Commands' such as; FOLLOW, GO TO, WAIT FOR, and the ability to communicate with – and even recruit – the many other characters inhabiting the game. In fact, bribing people to do your bidding is a very important skill which has to be mastered if any progress is to be made. The parser is very impressive and can quite easily handle phrases like DENZYL, FIND THE MAT AND THE KEY, FIND ME, GIVE EVERYTHING TO ME THEN RUN TO THE CASTLE, and while the player amuses himself doing other things in the game Denzyl will troll off and do as asked (if he's feeling generous toward you!).

The graphics are quite nice to look at first time around, but gameplay is faster without them and the game loses no atmosphere due to their absence.

The overall feeling I got with *Knight Orc* was one of slight confusion. Once successfully within part two the player discovers that he is wearing a visor, removal of which reveals the landscape and characters around him to be not what they seemed at first. This little quirk made me wonder if it was worth carrying on, as I presumed I was no longer playing the part of Grindleguts nor was I in a land of mystery and magic . . . was it all an illusion? Maybe if I had been able to play it more extensively all would have become clear. As it was, time being against me, I did not get as far as I would have liked; however, what I did see impressed me and I shall certainly try hard to find the time to continue with *Knight Orc*. Level 9 once again prove themselves to be masters of the single-load adventure, and with their other recent release, *Gnome Ranger* getting rave reviews everywhere, it looks like the Austins will be having a very nice Christmas thank you very much.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ATMOSPHERE** | **79%** |
| **INTERACTION** | **84%** |
| **CHALLENGE** | **81%** |
| **OVERALL** | **81%** |





# PLUNDERED HEARTS

**Infocom disk £24.95**

Touch my ring . . . no not that one, the red one . . . and journey back with me to the 17th Century, a cold, cruel yet romantic era when the mastery of the sea was in the hands of the Pirate. To the days of raping, pillaging and scurvy, when the very sight of the Skull and Crossbones gripped the bravest of seamen's hearts with terror. These were the days when the mere whisper of the name The Falcon, scourge of the seven seas, would send the most gallant of crews and their ships scuttling back to port in abject fear. It is into this period of history that this latest adventure from Infocom takes you, to fight and survive as best you can . . . in the guise of a woman.

The fact that in *Plundered Hearts* the player is a female is by no means the disadvantage it might seem (given the era in which it is set); the idea works very well as it requires the heroine to use her brain rather than brawn. It also adds more danger and intrigue to the story, taking into account how women were looked upon and treated in sixteen hundred and whatever, especially by those with less than honourable intent.

The packaging contains the usual Infocom extras which relate to the story, this one has a 50 guinea note and a letter from Jean Lafond explaining why the adventure opens on the schooner Lafond Deux bound for the West Indies. It appears that your father is very ill and needs you by his side to aid his recovery. Of course you

do not hesitate in setting off immediately. Unfortunately, before the ship can reach its destination it's attacked by pirates captained by none other than the dreaded Falcon, and you are kidnapped and taken aboard his vessel.

However, it turns out that Captain Nick Jamison (The Falcon) is not the evil man rumour would have one believe. Indeed, it transpires that this tall, lean, handsome buccaneer (with azure eyes!), has actually saved you from the apparently nefarious plans of Lafond. It seems the letter was a ploy to get you within the slimy grasp of this mad Frenchman who, The Falcon reveals, has captured your father and is holding him prisoner within his mansion on the island of Sinistra. Nick hands you a missive, signed by your father, which confirms this story and even begs your help in rescuing both him and his lover Lucy. The task becomes clear, you must reach Sinistra, save your father and Lucy and thwart the devilish plans of Lafond.

Nick leaves the ship supposedly safely anchored off the shores of Sinistra and sets off to deal with Lafond. However if your place in the plot was to let him do all the work it wouldn't be much of an adventure. Your first task is to save the ship from the dastardly sabotage efforts of one of The Falcon's crew, who is a spy in the employ of Lafond, a particularly nasty piece of work – even by piratical standards – using the name of Crulley. He has raised the anchor in an effort to have the tide dash the ship against a reef, and lit a fire in the ammunition hold just to make sure. A cool head and logical thought is required to get past the pirates on deck (who are not gentlemen by any stretch of imagination and would do disgusting pirate type things to you should they see you) and save the ship. Once accomplished, the way to shore is a barrel of laughs.

*Plundered Hearts* is a wonderful adventure, bursting at the seams with atmosphere, interesting puzzles and tense situations. I sometimes found it hard to remember that I wasn't playing in real-time and was typing furiously to try my ideas out before coming a cropper. Full of those little 17th Century quirks such as squeezing laudanum into the evil Count's drink, swinging on chandeliers, finding secret passages and buckling your swash at every one wearing a patch, *Plundered Hearts* is a masterpiece of ambience and action.

There are a couple of irritations in the game, for example typing SEARCH CABIN creates the response: 'You can't search a quarters' and inputting LOOK THROUGH THE CURTAINS awards the player with the reply: 'You can only tell the drapes is closed . . . ' (period inflection maybe?). And the reticule that you carry around with you does seem to be very large indeed, able to carry slabs of pork, clothes, powder horns and large keys with no trouble at all. However, these idiosyncrasies do not detract from the excellent gameplay, and, since I think I have mentioned the problem with the slow disk accessing before, the drawbacks of *Plundered Hearts* are miniscule indeed.

author, Amy Briggs, recreated this period in our history by reading romance novels and researching 17th Century costumes and ships. Hence the believability of the game, its accuracy and its attention to detail. This is Amy's first adventure for Infocom, let us hope there are many more to follow.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ATMOSPHERE** | **94%** |
| **INTERACTION** | **91%** |
| **CHALLENGE** | **81%** |
| **OVERALL** | **90%** |

# NORD AND BERT COULD NOT MAKE HEAD NOR TAIL OF IT

**Infocom disk only £24.95**

The author of *Ballyhoo* strikes again. Jeff O'Neill's latest for Infocom is a somewhat different style of adventure from the norm to say the least. *Nord And Bert Could Not Make Head Or Tail Of It* (which shall hereinafter be referred to as *Nord*!) is a collection of eight short stories, the first seven of which may be tackled in any order but must be completed before entry into the last scenario is permitted.

All eight stories take place in the mixed up town of Punster where you are to solve puzzles involving spoonerisms, homonyms and other general verbal trickery. For example, in the *Shopping Bizarre* scenario the player comes across a freezer containing the number 22 frozen onto the number 7, one soon realises that this is of course the formula for Pythagoras's theorem, and inputting the word PIE transforms the numbers into a fruit pie! The exact reason for doing this remains a mystery to me and is one one I shall probably not bother to solve.

The kind of puzzles found in *Nord* are neither clever nor very Infocom. Some are so simple that one wonders if it was worth wasting the memory on them.

In the *Play Jacks* scenario you find and take an object called a Jack of all Traits, this, as the name suggests is a gizmo which can perform many functions. One such function is to clear the stark whiteness of a particular location simply by having the player type in the name *Jack Frost*. There is very little challenge here, there is no feeling of pride at having cracked the problem and certainly no incentive instilled to carry on to the next location or scenario and see what mental challenges there are there. Most of the puzzles are either very easy or incredibly obscure, and all are silly. They left me with a feeling of 'why?'.

Mapping is made obsolete by the presence at the top of the screen of all the locations accessible from the current one, you simply type in the name to get there. There is an extensive help system available which may be accessed at any time during play and contains clues on every problem you will come across. Handy perhaps, but once boredom crept (which didn't take long) I found myself using these clues all the time just to get through the game as quickly and with as little effort as possible.

I could quite happily winge on about *Mousse, Box Boy* and *Worst Brat*, but there seems little point. Suffice to say that the usual, professional implementation, the parser, the size of the game and the general user-friendliness that Infocom include in their adventures are all present, but where is the adventure? *Nord* is not funny, not clever, not inspirational and very easy to switch off. What are they playing at? Examine the *Plundered Hearts* review amidst these pages to regain any faith lost in Infocom.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ATMOSPHERE** | **53%** |
| **INTERACTION** | **62%** |
| **CHALLENGE** | **53%** |
| **OVERALL** | **57%** |

## SERIALISED SOLUTION NUMBER ONE (PART THREE)

# KAYLETH

**US Gold/Adventuresoft**

Last month I left you inside the elevator at ground level. Now it's time to take a step into the big wide world of Zyron.

Leaving the elevator takes you to the very edge of Zymoria with exits at the north and south. Now, tidy yourself up a little, drop the gloves, pyxis and pyramid and wear the badge. It is time to enter Zymoria, and you do this by travelling south twice, and then go through the archway. As you pass through, nozzles spring from the walls and spray your body with rad-rays, which are harmless to you but not to those who are unprotected. Go south again and take the Qnuts, then go north and west. Inside the container dwelling there is a manual. Take it, read it, and jot down what you have learned, then drop the manual.

Examining the starship debris reveals your old Zyroneon self Yurek, although now is not a good time to try and leave the city with him (remember the rad-rays?). Travel east and then northwest (the game asks if you are sure because it's going to douse you in rad-rays again . . . as long as you are not trying to sneak out with yourself you will be safe).

Go north into the stark landscape and examine the earth to find a nodule – examining it, you are informed that it will flare up on impact. North of here is a crater, which you may enter, and examine the ashes in it. A steel ball should come to light. Climb out of the crater, and drop the ball because you do not need it just yet – you will in fact be passing this way again. From here, travel west, down and east to the tunnel entrance then, and then enter the tunnel. You are now confronted by a solid door which blocks your way. Insert the Masta cartridge into your data slot and shoot plasma at door. Easy for a droid.

Going east into a small chamber reveals shelves which you need to look at closely. Once done, you should have access to a cube, a spraysuit and a whiffy bar. Get the suit and wear it for protection from the acidic sea. You are able to use a skimmer which is parked 'down' from here. A quick scan round the skimmer, once aboard, reveals the lack of a starter fuse. Luckily though, you just happen to have a spare one with you (don't you?). Insert the fuse into the skimmer and start it. After a very fast ride you will find yourself on a pebble beach, southwest and then east from here is the blackened ruin of a burnt-out house. Examine the rubble to find the steel hatch and open it (you are allowed to because you wear the badge that Yagmok gave you). Going down to the basement brings you face to face with Dribble. Shall I leave you here over the Christmas holiday or shall I tell you that Dribbles like Qnuts? . . . I think I'll leave you here.

If I was a really nasty entity I would let you all stew in your own extremas, fortunately for you I am relatively nice, and to prove it . . . I offer . . .

# VALE OF HOPE



**GUILD OF THIEVES (Rainbird):** The oil painting is the only one of any value. The skeleton's finger will unlock the sarcophagus. Reflect on the beam in the muddy room.
**LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS (Infocom):** Scare the mouse with the pussy picture.
**LURKING HORROR (Infocom):** Move those palettes with the fork lift truck.
**PLUNDERED HEARTS (Infocom):** Tear your frock and soak the rag in water to douse the fire in the hold.
**REBEL PLANET (US GOLD):** Tap the crystal with the fork to gain entrance to the University. Bend the cell bars with the wrench.
**TOWER OF DESPAIR (Games Workshop):** Scroll past the gargoyle gate.
**WISHBRINGER (Infocom):** Need a lift to the island? Whistle for it!

# EXAMINE ALL

First of all a plea from me to **Patrick Montier** of Rennes in France: I should be grateful if you would write to me again, Patrick, as your letter looks very interesting . . . it is unfortunate that I can't actually read it! Try using a pen or pencil next time as they are much easier to control than the piece of cotton you have obviously been trying to write with.

**Tony Kinnear** writes from Brentwood to ask why I include a serialised solution amid these adventure pages. You will have realised that *Kayleth* is hardly a new adventure and, being quite tough, it is the kind of game that the players may give up on and leave on the shelf for months. The idea of the solution is not to spoil anybody's enjoyment (you don't have to read it if you don't want to), but perhaps to coax the player into having another go at it. Contained within the solution may be the answer to a particular problem which has been preventing advancement in the game, and once read the player may then continue under his own steam (or cheat and read the rest of the solution!) only using the clues given as and when necessary. Tony also asks why the White Wizard has left ZZAP!. If I knew why Wizards did what they did, Tony, then I should be a wiser being.

**Mark Murray** is stuck in the first part of *The Colour Of Magic*. He would appreciate help from anybody and may be contacted at *94 Winstree Rd, Steinway, Colchester, Essex, CO3 5PZ.*

**J Brown** of apparently no fixed abode is stuck in *Macbeth* – he cannot kill Macdonwald. Perhaps if you read the book of the play that came with game, Mr Brown, you would have learned that you must unseam Macdonwald with axe'.

If there is an adventurer out there who has completed *The Causes Of Chaos* then perhaps they would be good enough to help **Jeff Gillan** of *50 Tynedale Crescent, New Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear DH4 7RP.* He appears to be having a slight problem entering the cave guarded by four Dentrassi. While on the subject, the complete solution to this game would be most gratefully accepted by myself so that I may pass on clues to other puzzled readers.

I thank you for your interest and communications, more next month. In the meantime I understand there are some human festivities about to commence, whatever they are I trust you shall enjoy them.




# Clever Contacts

**It's getting bigger!** Every month I receive more and more entries for the Clever Contacts section, keep 'em coming. As long as no one abuses the system and refrains from phoning those involved in the dead of night, there is no reason why Clever Contacts should not continue to expand. Just make sure you leave me enough room to review the odd adventure won't you!

Adventureland, Adenture Quest, Arrow Of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade Of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle Of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals Of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire Of Karn, Enchanter, Erik The Viking, Escape From Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye Of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest At The Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds In Space, Hampstead, Heroes Of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords Of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask Of The Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery Of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus And Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid Of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return To Eden, Ring Of Power, Robin Of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship Of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror Of Claymorgue Castle, Souls Of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels Of Babylon, The Journey, Neverending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard And Princess, Quest Of Merravid, Tower Of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, WitcheS Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath Of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
**Bob Shepherd, 106, Highfield Street, Coalville, Leicestershire**

Heroes Of Karn, Bored Of The Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return To Oz, Masters Of The Universe, Robin Of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price Of Magik.
**Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France**

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle Of Terror.
**Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece**

Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer Of Claymorgue Castle, Worm In Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Return To Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes In Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda.
**Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA. Tel: 0227 274846 (10 am to 8 pm ONLY)**

Tower Of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka.
**John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69**
**Tel: 041 771 7729**

Mordons Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
**Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325**

Zork I, II & III, Adventureland, Dangermouse In BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple Of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple Of Vran, Mask Of The Sun, Lords Of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade Of Blackpoole, Seastalker, Hitchhikers, Ultima Iii, Search For King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder On The Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord Of The Rings, Starcross, Subsunk, Worm In Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin Of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard Of Akyrz, Return To Eden, Red Moon, NevereNding Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus And Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored Of The Rings, Empire Of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow Of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring Of Power, Quest For Holy The Grail, Kentilla.
**Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia**

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry ChriStmas, Robin Of Sherwood, Price Of Magik, Lord Of The Rings.
**Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH. Tel: 0606 781028**

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only).
**Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY. Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm**

Dungeon Adventure, Lord Of The Rings, Quest For The Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords Of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet Of Death
**David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri**

# adventure




Leather GodDesses Of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Neverending Story, Heroes Of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin Of Sherwood
**Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN**

AdveNtureland, Subsunk, Heroes Of Karn, Empire Of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
**Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand. Tel: 867074**

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, WizArd Of Akyrz, Quest For The Holy Grail, Zim Sala Bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula.
**Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland. Tel: 036565 594**

Upper Gumtree, Bugsy Malone, Neverending Story.
**Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Eimtree Farm, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS19 0TJ. Tel: 0642 587789 (between 4pm and 10pm)**

The Hobbit, Erik The Viking, Castle Of Terror, Eureka, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Heroes Of Karn, Empire Of Karn, Zork I, Zork III, Exodus, Ultima III, The Boggit, Lords Of Time, Never Ending Story, The Hulk, Temple Of Terror, Ultima IV, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Valkyrie 17, Sherlock, The Fourth Protocol, The Helm, Wizard Of Akyrz, Perseus And Andromeda, Lord Of The Rings (Part 1), Emerald Isle, Quest For The Holy Grail, Hacker, Colosal Cave.
**Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs BB12 7QU. Tel: 0282 74765 (between 6pm and 10 pm)**

The Hobbit, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Zzzzz, Spytrek, Robo City, Imagination, Demon Knight, Koboyashu Naru, Tower Of Despair, Time Tunnel, Citadel Of Chaos, Eureka (Parts 1 and 2).
**Paul Hardy, 33 Fir Tree drive, Wales, Sheffield S31 8LZ.**

Hitch-hikers Guide, Zork I, Zork II, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses, Cutthroats.
**Dave Rogers, 15 Elm Terrace, Westfield, Radstock, Bath, Avon BA3 3XP.**

Amazon, Borrowed Time, Castle Of Terror, Castle Adventure, Computer Adventure, Dracula Part 1, Grand Larceny, Haunted House, Humalayan Adventure, Labyrinth, Mad Mummy, Mindshadow, Murder On The Waterfront, NevereNding Story, Ninja, Raka-Tua Volcano, Scroll Of Akhbar, Seabase Delta, Silver Mountain, Subsunk, The Boggit, The Dallas Quest, The Hobbit, Ultima IV, Voodoo Castle, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Zzzz.
**Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, 3047, Vic. Australia.**

Ultima IV, The Bard's Tale, Voodoo Castle, Phantasie I, NevereNding Story, Dracula, The Prince Of Magic, Borrowed Time, The Pawn, Seabase Delta, Deadline, Zork III, Wishbringer.
**Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.**

Hitchhikers GUide, The Hobbit, Lord Of The Rings, The Shadows Of Mordor.
**Warren Lee Melia, 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 4EZ.**

Castle Of Terror, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Mindshadow, Holy Grail, Redhawk, Snowball, Subsunk, Twin Kingdom Valley, Voodoo Castle.
**Jeff Gillan, 50 Tynedale Crescent, Penshaw, Houghton–Le–Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7RP.**

Starcross, Suspended, Suspect, Leather Goddesses, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Planetfall, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror, Seastalker, Beuracracy, Trinity, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchhikers Guide, Wishbringer, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Enchanter, The Pawn, Ultima I, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Sherlock, Gremlins, The Hulk, Terrormolinos, The Fourth Protocol, The Hobbit.
**Billy Kavanagh, 49 Drake Hall, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2RA.**

Neverending Story, Zzzz, Quest for Holy Grail.
**Tony Kinnear, 49 Wainwright Avenue, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 2SZ.**

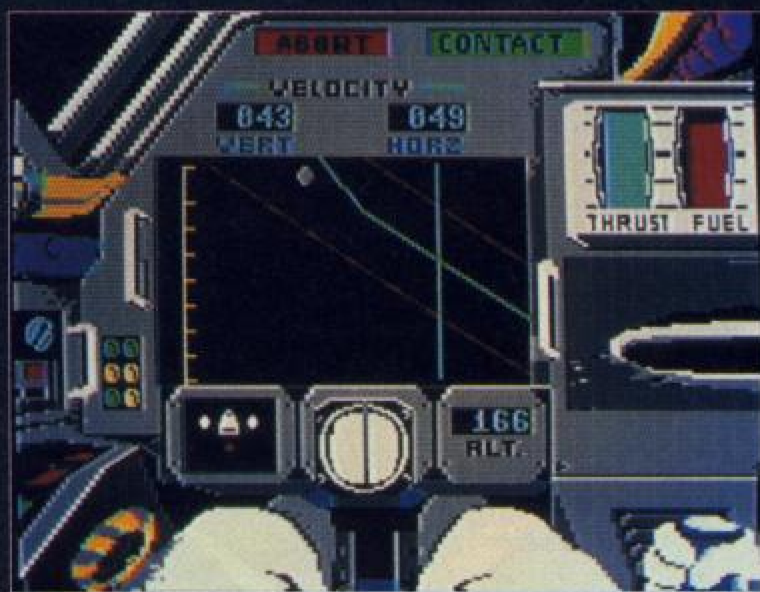
Imagination, Neverending Story, Terrormolinos, Twin Kingdom Valley, Bugsy Malone, HaMpstead, Robin Of Sherwood, Zzzz, Quest of Merridaviod, Upper Gumtree.
**Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elm Tree farm, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 0TJ. Tel: 0642 587789.**

# APOLLO 18★
# TEST DRI

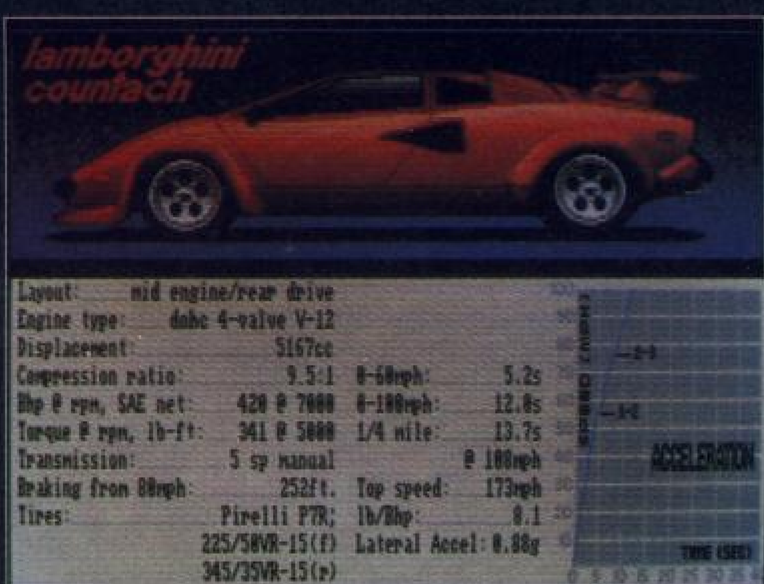
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BET YOU CAN'T. THEY BOTH HAVE GREAT ACTION AN




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DRIVE SET ROUTES WITHIN GIVEN TIME LIMITS. LOOK OUT FOR SLOW TRUCKS, OTHER TRAFFIC, MEN AT WORK AND BE CAREFUL TO USE YOUR RADAR DETECTOR TO LOCATE SPEED TRAPS.

**THEN......** GO OUT AND BUY THEM BOTH. BET YOU WILL.
BECAUSE THEY'RE THE BEST AROUND.

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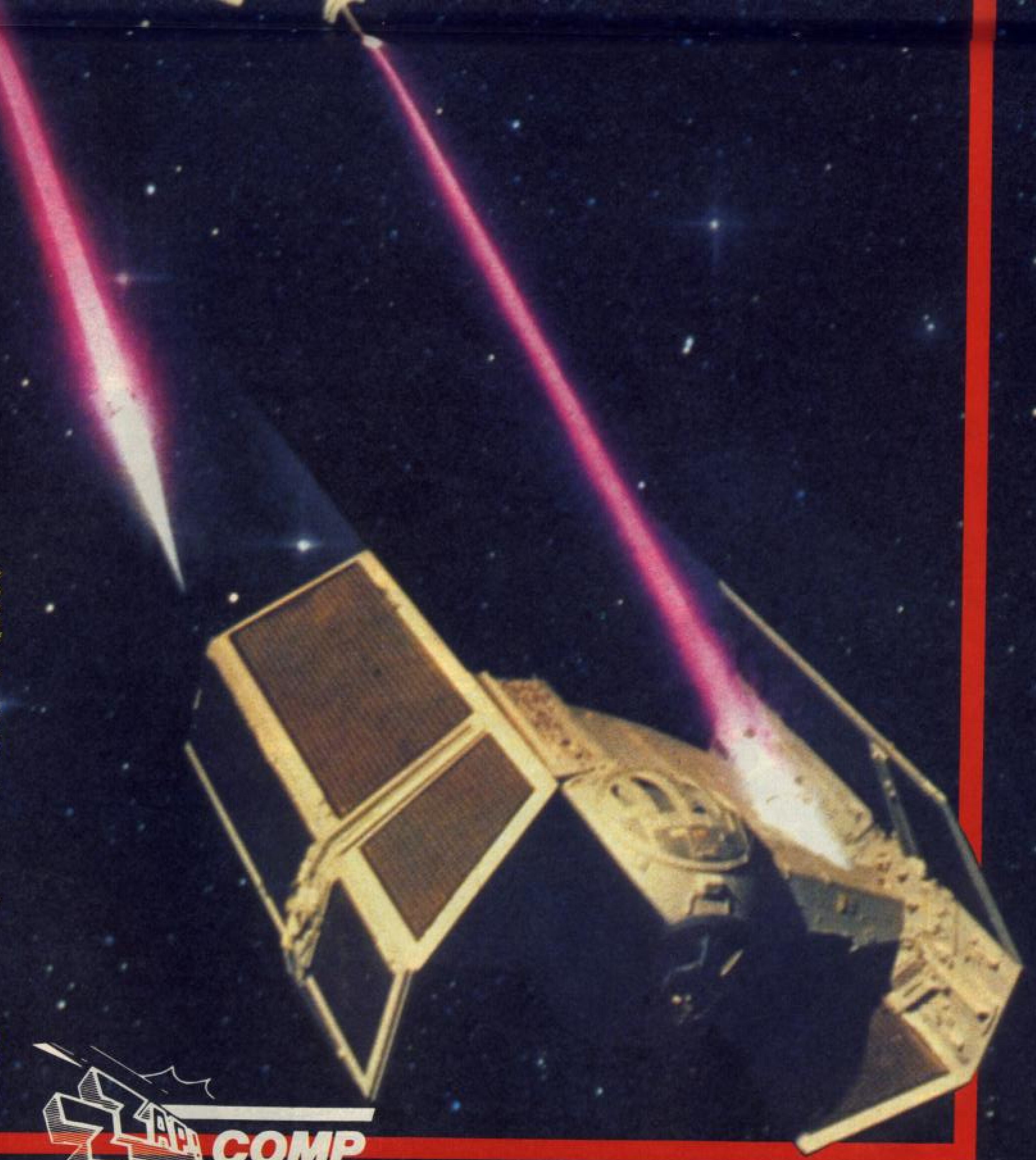
# UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR IMAGINATION

Electronic Arts software is available on a wide range of home computers including Commodore C64, Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, IBM, Spectrum and Amstrad. Not all titles are available on every machine format.

For a full broadsheet describing the complete range or information on your nearest stockist write to: **Electronic Arts, 11-49 Station Rd., Langley, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8YN.** Or call our Customer Services Dept. on **0753 46465.**

ELECTRONIC ARTS™


STAR WARS
WIN A FABULOUS TV/VIDEO OUTFIT
THANKS TO DOMARK
10 RUNNERS-UP PRIZES OF
STAR WARS VIDEOS



That zany software house Domark, whose previous releases include *Split Personalities*, *Trivial Pursuit*, *The Living Daylights*, and the infamous *Friday the 13th*, have brought off a considerable coup by obtaining the rights to produce conversions of the Atari arcade machines based on the three Lucasfilm films: *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.

The first of the Trilogy is about to burst onto your TV or monitor in the shape of *Star Wars*.

To celebrate this momentous event, the Domark crew have generously provided a superb combined Amstrad remote control 14-inch colour TV/VHS video recorder, worth around £400! If this isn't enough, both the prizewinner and ten runners-up will receive a copy of the *Star Wars* film on video (if you haven't got a video, you'd better win first prize).

This stunning prize will go to the first entry pulled out of a sack containing the correct answers to the following simple questions:

1. What is the name of Han Solo's spaceship?
2. What type of spaceship appears first in the film?
3. Which planet does the Deathstar first blow up?
4. Which character does Peter Cushing play?
5. What are the serial numbers of the first two robots bought by Luke from the Jawas?
6. Who does Luke live with on Tatooine?
7. In which town does Luke first meet Han Solo?
8. What insignia does Luke's X-wing carry?
9. Where is the rebel base situated?
10. Which company is responsible for the film's special effects?

All entries should be sent to the usual address of: **STAR WARS SCREEN TEST COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than January the 14th 1988. Right, get your thinking caps on, and remember – the Force will be with you . . . always.

ZZAP! COMP

# WIN! WIN! WIN! A SKATEBOARD, JAM SHORTS AND A GAME

## OR FAILING THAT, JAM SHORTS AND A GAME OR EVEN JUST A GAME ON IT'S OWN . . .




## ZZAP! COMP

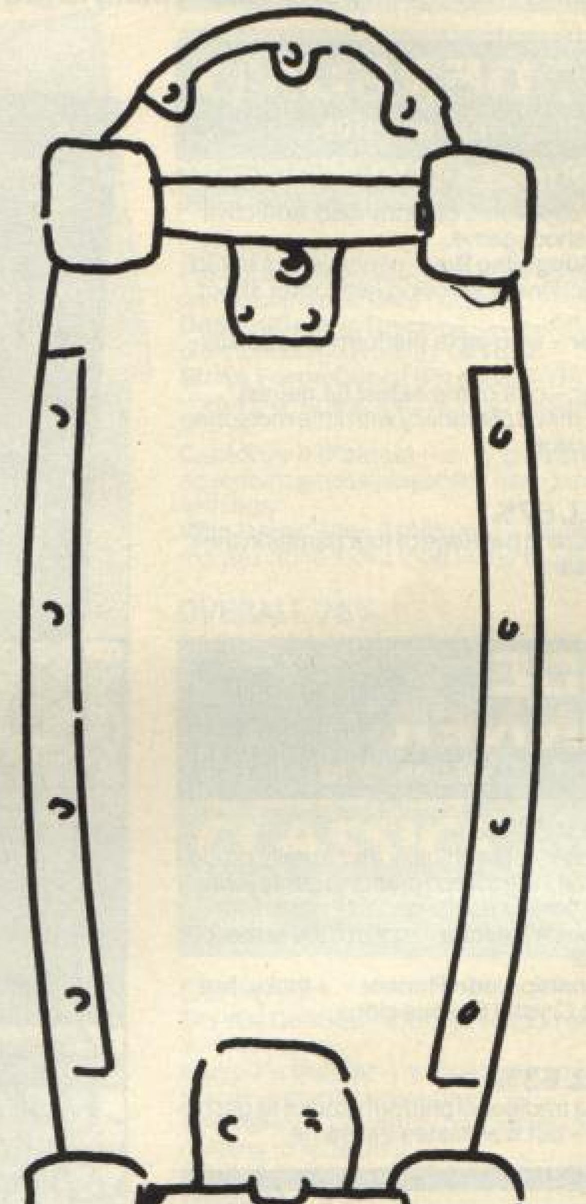
*Skate or Die* is Electronic Arts' Sizzling new release, riding high on the renewed interest generated by this thrilling sport. If you fancy a go at skateboarding, this competition is exactly what you've been waiting for.

EOA are providing a superb skate-of-the-art board, a specially made pair of *Skate or Die* jam shorts and a copy of *Skate or Die* for the winner, plus 10 first runners-up prizes of shorts plus a copy of the game, and 20 second runners-up prizes of *Skate or Die* games. Phew! What do you have to do to win these goodies? How about designing a flash logo for a skateboard? Yes, that sounds like a good idea!

Using the template as a pattern, decorate the board in a suitable fashion, bearing in mind the size of a real board. The most stylish, colourful, and well executed entry will waltz off with an armful of goodies, while the next 30 entries will be awarded their prizes accordingly.

Entries should be sent to: **DIE SKATING COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than the 14th day of January, MCMLXXXVIII – and don't forget to include your name and address.

Right, scribble or die!



Name ..................................................

Address ..................................................

..................................................

..................................................




# A CRUCIAL CHRISTMAS COMPILATION COMPARISON

**The Christmas period is a time when compilation tapes come to the fore, and this year is no exception, with a deluge of collections and specially packaged 'gift sets'. Julian Rignall casts a critical eye over the latest bunch, and offers his judgement.**

**There's little point in rating the Graphics and Sound of a compilation as a whole – so, taking into consideration the quality of the packaging and instructions – and of course the games, a cross between a Presentation, Hookability, Lastability and Value rating is provided in the form of an Overall percentage and comment.**

## BRODERBUND

**US Gold, £9.99 cassette**

Contents:
**Stealth** – simplistic, but strangely addictive race and shoot game.
**Raid on Bungeling Bay** – playable, but dated multi-directionally scrolling helicopter shoot 'em up.
**Spelunker** – enjoyable platform arcade adventure.
**Choplifter** – one of the oldest 64 games around. Limited playability with little more than curiosity value.

**OVERALL 67%**
An entertaining package of four games in their autumn years.

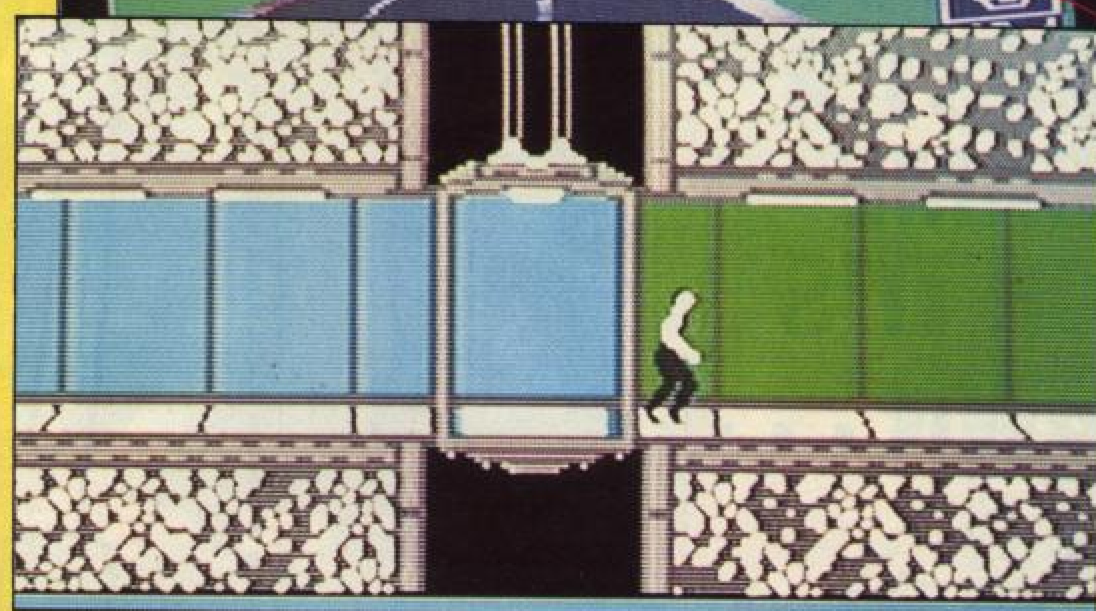



## LODE RUNNER

**US Gold, £9.99 cassette**

Contents:
**Lode Runner** – graphically and aurally crude, but playable 150-screen platform game, complete with screen designer.
**Loderunner's Rescue** – more of the same, but a lot harder.
**Championship Lode Runner** – a tricky, but absorbing *Crystal Castles* clone.

**OVERALL 63%**
Plenty for a traditional platform addict to get his teeth into – but it all tastes the same.



## 5 COMPUTER HITS

**Beau Jolly, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Wizard's Lair (Bubble Bus)** – spectrumesque arcade adventure well past its prime.
**Skooldaze (Micro-Mega)** – an original and interesting idea, suffering from advanced decrepitude.
**Kettle (Alligata)** – boring two player collecting game which swiftly goes off the boil.
**Popeye (Piranha)** – a good looking, but limited puzzle/arcade adventure.
**Trap (Alligata)** – garish shooting action partially redeemed by a great 'hidden' demo.

**OVERALL 54%**
Five dying games have their final fling before being put out to pasture.




## EPYX EPICS

**US Gold, £9.99 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Summer Games** – the Grandfather of the highly successful *Games* family, and although somewhat dated, is still very playable.
**Pitstop II** – an exhilarating head-to-head racing game.
**Impossible Mission** – alternatively known at ZZAP! Towers as the greatest game of all time.
**Breakdance** – the weak link in an otherwise strong Epyx chain.

**OVERALL 94%**
Three timeless classics, and an amusing Breakdance game thrown in for good measure.

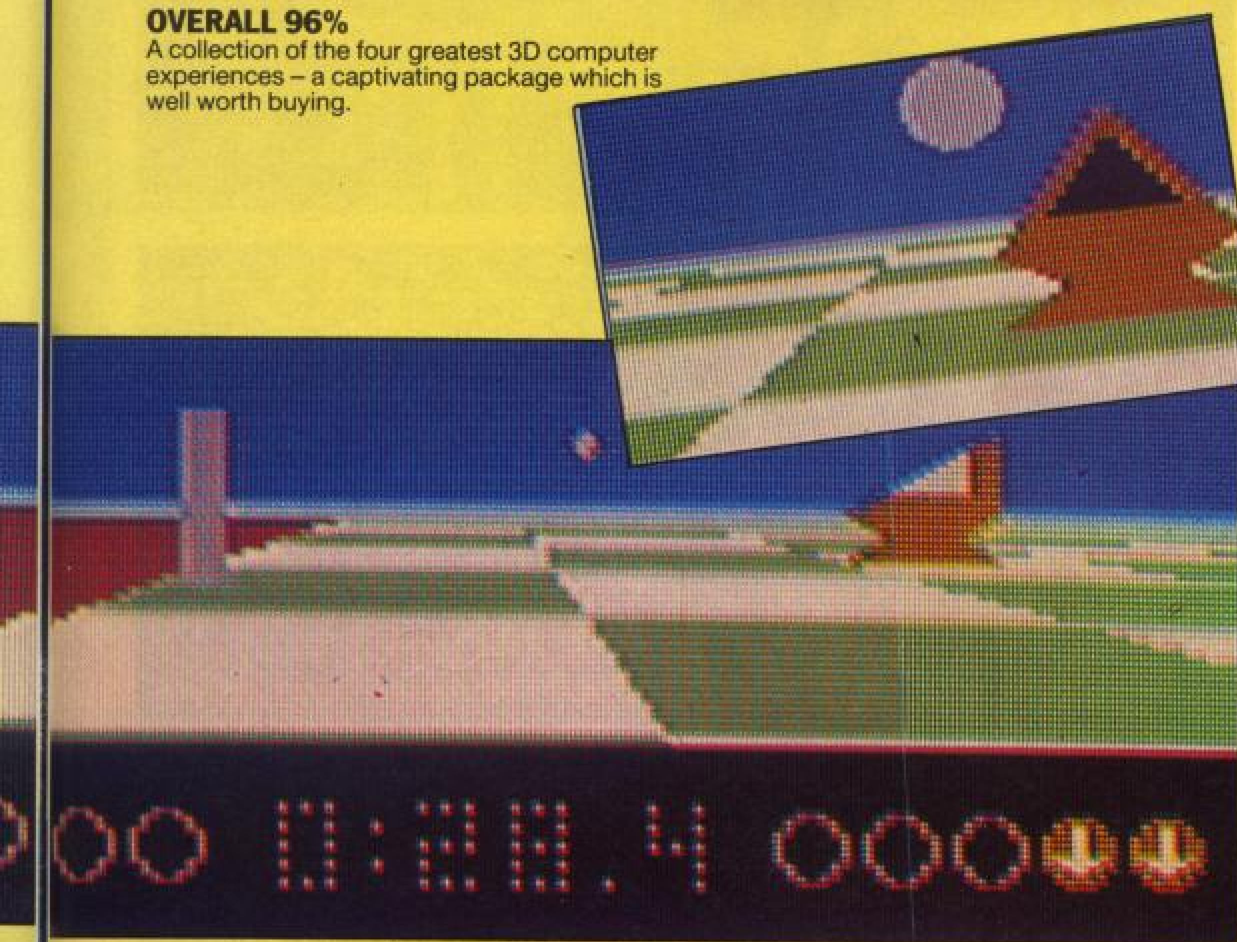


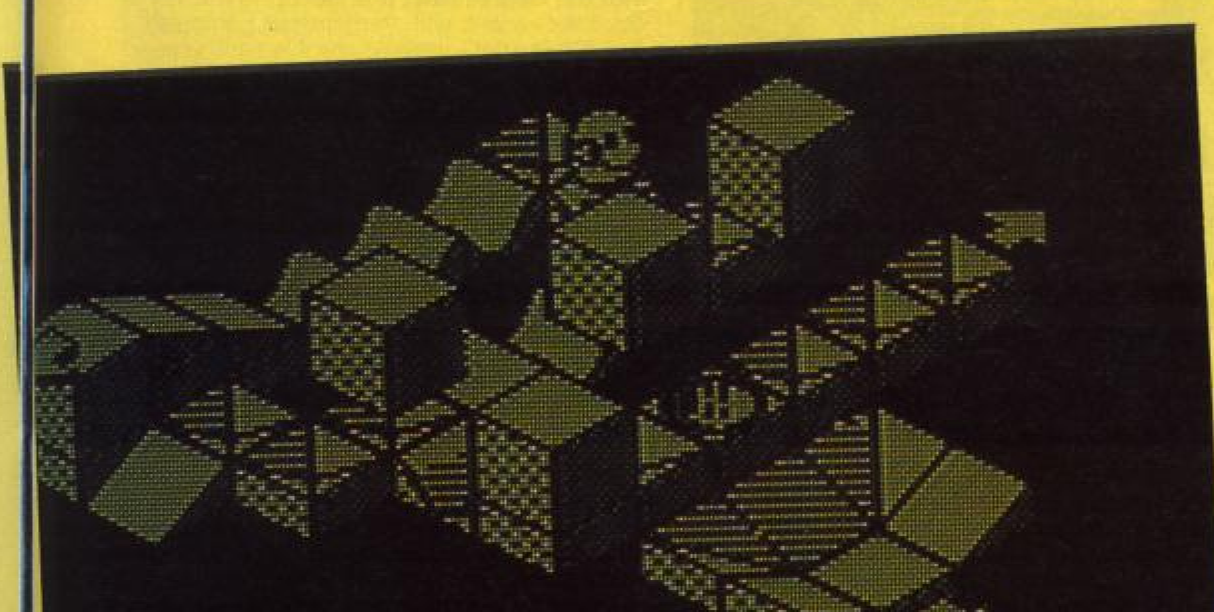

## LUCASFILM PRESTIGE

**Activision, £9.99 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Rescue on Fractalus** – Lucasfilm's incredible first release, which has depth, playability and character.
**Koronis Rift** – a very absorbing first person 3D alien exploration game.
**Ballblazer** – fabulous future sport entertainment offering unsurpassed one-on-one action.
**The Eidolon** – thrilling 3D journey through the inner mind, with some incredible graphics.

**OVERALL 96%**
A collection of the four greatest 3D computer experiences – a captivating package which is well worth buying.






## FIVE STAR GAMES II

**Beau Jolly, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Paradroid (Hewson)** – Andrew Braybrook's quintessential arcade blaster.
**Dandy (Electric Dreams)** – one of the poorest *Gauntlet* clones money can buy.
**Strike Force Cobra (Piranha)** – difficult and unrewarding isometric forced perspective action.
**Cauldron II (Palace)** – an engrossing arcade adventure whose playability hasn't diminished with age.
**Who Dares Wins II (Alligata)** – Alligata's *Commando* clone looks long in the tooth.

**OVERALL 76%**
An odd mixture of cabbages and kings, with *Dandy* being the prizewinning vegetable.

## COIN-OP CLASSICS

**US Gold, £9.99 triple cassette pack**

Contents:
**Crystal Castles** – average version of the Atari coin-op classic.
**Kung-Fu Master** – enjoyable horizontally scrolling martial arts action.
**Breakthru** – laughably bad shoot 'em up with nothing to redeem it.

**OVERALL 42%**
The coin-ops might have been classics, but these aren't.

## CLASSIX 1

**The Edge, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Bobby Bearing** – dextral 3D isometric perspective arcade adventure with fabulous feel.
**Brian Bloodaxe** – boring *Jet Set Willy* clone suffering from flickery graphics.
**Quo Vadis** – sprawling exploring game well past its sell-by date.
**Wizardry** – extremely obscure and ultimately unrewarding arcade adventure.
**Firequest** – uninteresting and ancient arcade game.

**OVERALL 45%**
Apart from *Bobby Bearing*, a weak and dated collection of not so golden oldies.

## SUMMER GOLD

**US Gold, £9.99 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**10th Frame** – graphically convincing and highly playable ten-pin bowling simulation.
**Impossible Mission** – see *Epyx Epics* for details.
**Dambusters** – dull aerial mission over war-time industrial Germany.
**Rebel Planet** – illustrated text adventure based on the eponymous Fighting Fantasy book.
**Bruce Lee** – enjoyable mixture of fighting and arcade adventuring.
**Beach Head II** – the incredible follow-up to *Beach Head*, with great graphics and stunning speech.

**OVERALL 85%**
A tasty pot-pourrie of genres, providing a wide variety of game styles and plenty of long-term entertainment.











## SOLID GOLD

**US Gold, £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk**

Contents:
**Gauntlet** – bugged, but extremely playable arcade conversion.
**Ace of Aces** – take to the skies and fly thrilling missions in a Mosquito fighter bomber.
**Leaderboard** – deservedly successful golf simulation.
**Winter Games** – the weakest of the *Games* series, but excellent nevertheless.
**Infiltrator** – brilliant, but flawed three-part arcade game.

**OVERALL 93%**
A varied package which offers a consistently high standard of playable and compelling programs.



## 6-PAK

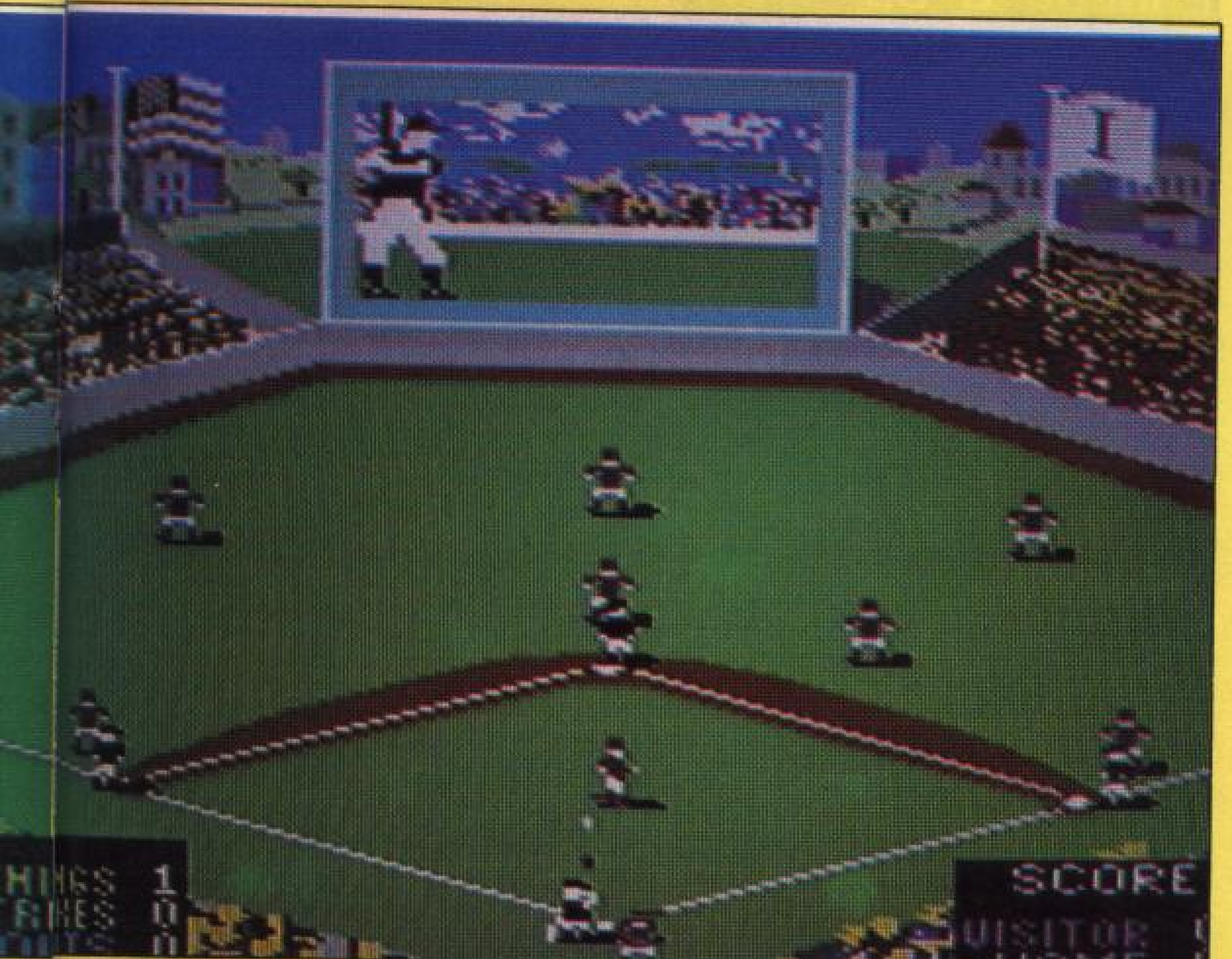
**Elite, £9.95 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Batty (Elite)** – a *Breakout* game with enough originality to make it entertaining.
**Lightforce (FTL)** – frenetic vertically scrolling blasting action.
**Shockway Rider (FTL)** – unusual and addictive parallax scrolling knock 'em down.
**International Karate (System 3)** – smashing beat 'em up, only recently surpassed by its sequel.
**Into the Eagles Nest (Pandora)** – a military *Gauntlet* variant, with tremendous gameplay.
**Ace (Cascade)** – realistic, involved and varied flight/combat simulation.

**OVERALL 90%**
A neat mixture of excellent games, with only *Batty* lacking lasting appeal.














## GAME, SET AND MATCH

**Ocean, £12.95 four cassette pack, £17.95 double disk pack**

Contents:
**GBA Basketball (Activision)** – unexciting two-on-two basketball simulation.
**Hypersports (Imagine)** – a good conversion of the old Konami button-bashing arcade game.
**Snooker (Visions)** – ancient and dire simulation with pathetic graphics and unconvincing ball movement.
**Ping Pong (Imagine)** – average conversion of a mediocre arcade game.
**Super Soccer (Imagine)** – a ghastly control method and feeble graphics are all part and parcel of this appalling soccer simulation
**Barry McGuigan's Boxing (Activision)** – ageing boxing simulation which hasn't lost its punch.
**Tennis (Psion)** – appealing and playable multi-level tennis simulation.
**Jonah Barrington's Squash (New Generation)** – lacks a decent 'feel', and has some poor 'speech'.
**World Series Baseball (Imagine)** – although it's getting on a bit, *WSB* hasn't lost any of its appeal over the years.
**Daley Thompson's Supertest (Ocean)** – the game that was advertised in ZZAP! Issue 1, but hasn't appeared on the Commodore until now. It wasn't worth the wait.

**OVERALL 75%**
A wide variety of sports games which range from the excellent to the forgettable.

## 4 ACTION HITS

**American Action, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Soldier One** – a very unexciting *Beach Head* clone.
**Captured** – dire platform action with nothing to redeem it.
**43** – not the arcade game, but an incredibly poor version of *1942*.
**Blood 'n' Guts** – silly pagan sports simulation from uncivilised times.

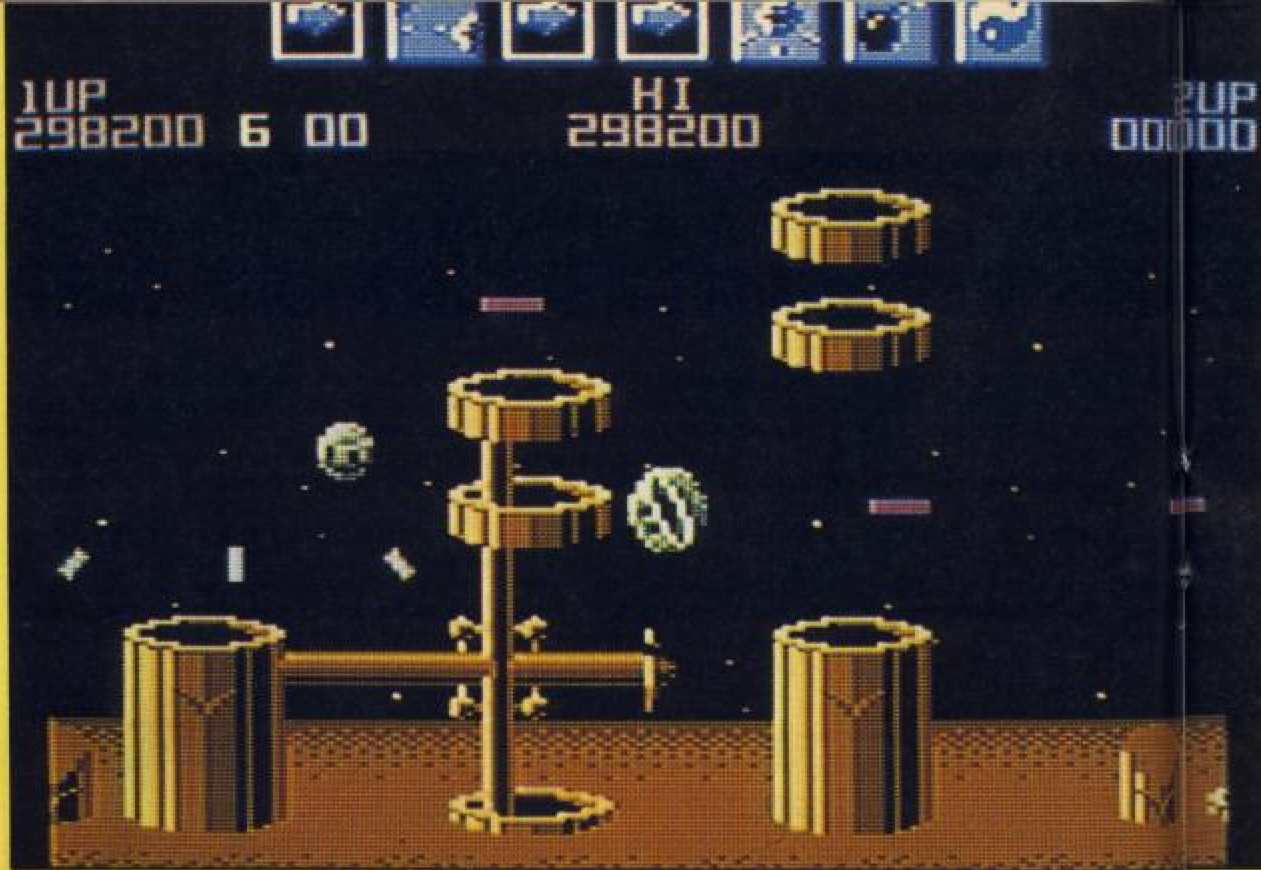
**OVERALL 30%**
A startlingly poor quartet.

## LIVE AMMO

**Ocean, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Army Moves** – attractive, but extremely difficult shoot 'em up.
**Rambo** – superb music, but the gameplay is sadly lacking depth, variety and addiction.
**Green Beret** – high quality conversion of the ageing arcade game.
**Top Gun** – never released at full price, and it's easy to see why: the action is simplistic and unbelievably tedious.
**Great Escape** – enjoyable isometric perspective wartime romp through a prison camp.

**OVERALL 67%**
An interesting package that has more low points than high ones.




## POWER PLAYS

**The Power House, £9.95 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Hercules** – visually and aurally dire, but the platform action is incredibly addictive.
**Terminator** – the most decrepit *Uridium* clone imaginable.
**Aftermath** – a ghastly *Xevious* clone that takes repitition to new extremes.
**Space Warrior** – an entertaining *Joust* variant with eggs instead of buzzards.
**Sqij** – vapid arcade adventure.
**Gods and Heroes** – a worthy sequel to *Hercules*, and just as addictive.
**Xenon Ranger** – loathesome combination of shooting and platform action.
**Gun Runner** – unpolished variant on the *Choplifter* theme.

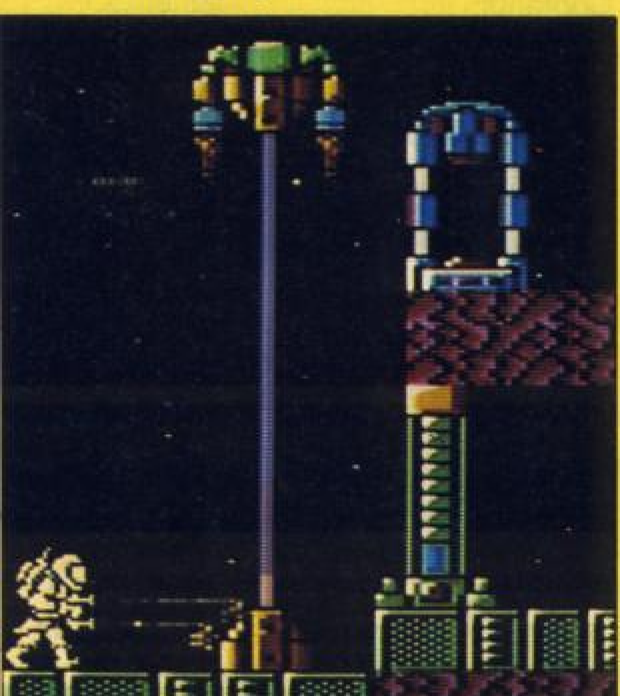
**OVERALL 41%**
A compilation of eight £1.99 games, some of which are grotty to an extreme. It would be better to buy the three good games separately, and save the change.

## 4 SMASH HITS

**Hewson, £9.95 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Zynaps** – one of the best horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups around, which feels as good as it looks.
**Exolon** – difficult, but engrossing flick screen explore and shoot game.
**Ranarama** – absorbing and addictive combination of *Paradroid* and *Gauntlet*.
**Uridium plus** – tweaked version of the Braybrook classic, with new ships to conquer.

**OVERALL 88%**
Four very high quality shoot 'em ups – well worth checking out.



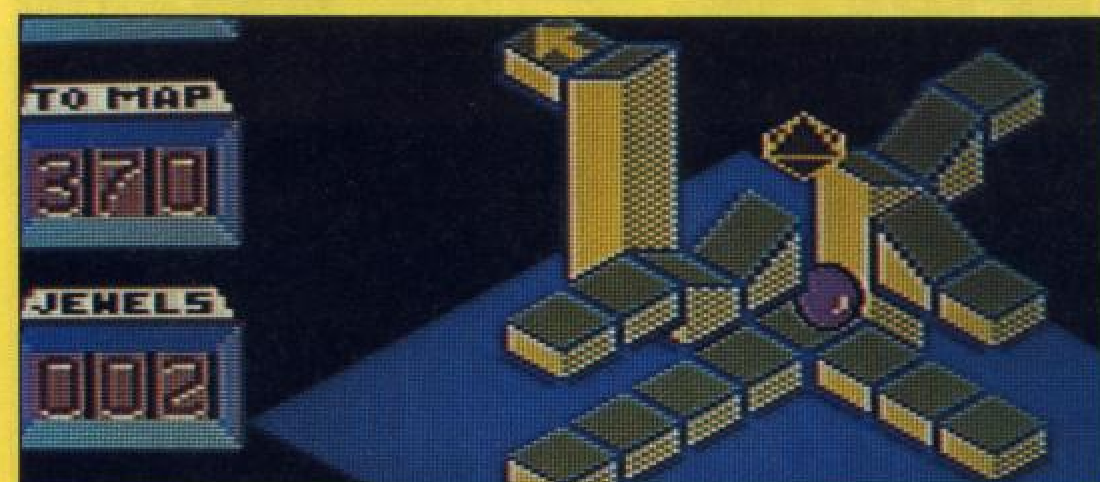


## MAGNIFICENT 7

**Ocean, £9.95 cassette, £19.95 disk**

Contents:
**Head Over Heels** – incredibly addictive isometric perspective arcade adventure of epic proportions.
**Wizball** – Sensible Software's Sizzling surreal shoot 'em up
**Arkanoid** – a great conversion of the *Breakout* arcade variant, having plenty of polish and playability.
**The Great Escape** – see *Live Ammo* for details.
**Frankie Goes to Hollywood** – captivating pop-art action, featuring a variety of game styles.
**Cobra** – a pathetic game of the film, inept in every sense of the word.
**Short Circuit** – a strange choice for a film tie-in which is lacklustre and unexciting.
**Yie Ar Kung-Fu** – simple beat 'em up action from the arcades.

**OVERALL 91%**
More like a 'Very Competent 8'. Five greats and three not-so-greats, but still deserving of a place in the software collection.

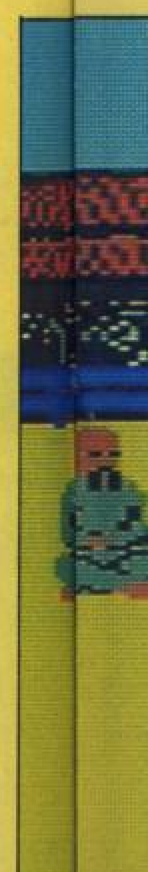



## 10 COMPUTER HITS 4

**Beau Jolly, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Bride of Frankenstein (Ariolasoft)** – barely satisfying arcade adventure.
**Alleykat (Hewson)** – Andrew Braybrook's graphically stunning vertically scrolling futuristic race game.
**Classic Snooker (Anco)** – average simulation with limited playability.
**Starquake (Bubble Bus)** – an enjoyable 512 screen all-action arcade adventure
**Uchi Mata (Martech)** – a gripping Judo-based beat 'em up.
**Sacred Armour of Antiriad (Palace)** – gorgeous graphics are featured throughout this superb arcade adventure.
**Deactivators (Ariolasoft)** – intruiging split-screen problem solving game.
**Spindizzy (Electric Dreams)** – outstanding arcade adventure set across a stunning 3D world.
**Skaterock (Bubble Bus)** – visually and aurally awful, but playable skateboard race game.
**Iridis Alpha (Llamasoft)** – a bizarre but incredibly fast shoot 'em up – arguably Minter's best yet!
**Magic Madness (Anco)** – weird, but strangely addictive cross between a platform game and an arcade adventure.
**Dandy (Electric Dreams)** – See *Five Star Games II* for details.

**OVERALL 92%**
Incredible value for money, despite a couple of pitfalls.



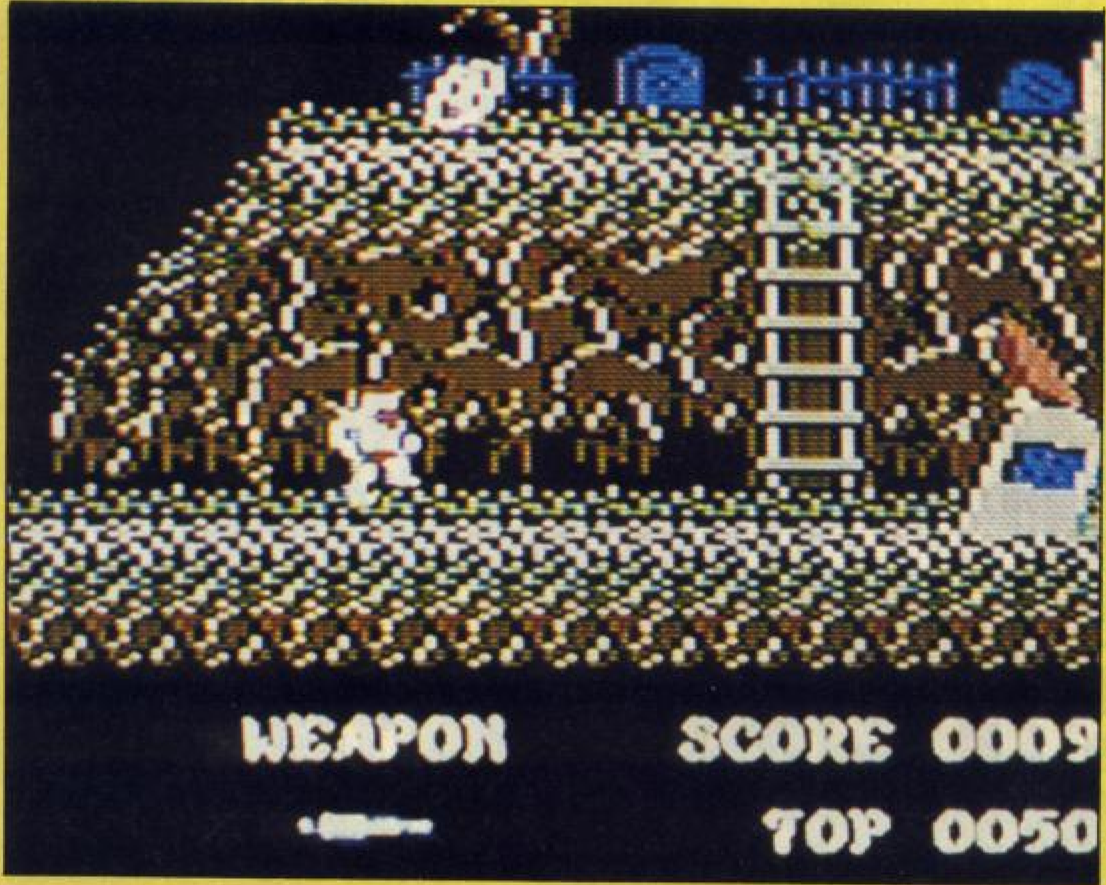


## TEN GREAT GAMES

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 double cassette pack**

Contents:
**Avenger** – a playable mixture of martial arts, *Gauntlet* and arcade adventuring.
**Future Knight** – cute multi-directionally scrolling arcade adventure with limited appeal.
**Krakout** – reasonable 100 screen *Breakout* clone.
**Bounder** – very addictive vertically scrolling platform game.
**Footballer of the Year** – computer interpretation of the board game.
**Trailblazer** – novel two player race game with balls.
**Highway Encounter** – highly original flick screen shoot 'em up.
**Monty on the Run** – archaic platform action with arcade adventure overtones.
**West Bank** – enjoyable, but limited reaction game.
**Jack the Nipper** – amusing flick screen arcade adventure.

**OVERALL 93%**
A very varied compilation with plenty to keep a gamer happy for days on end. None of the games are poor, and all offer plenty of playability. Well worth considering.









## BEST OF ELITE

**Elite, £14.95 cassette, £19.95 disk**

Contents:
**Bomb Jack** – awful version of the coin-op classic.
**Frank Bruno's Boxing** – mildly addictive *Punch-Out* variant.
**Commando** – reasonable conversion of the vertically scrolling arcade game.
**Airwolf** – ageing, but enjoyable multi-directionally scrolling exploration game.
**Paperboy** – disappointing conversion with poor graphics and gameplay.
**Bomb Jack II** – far better than its prequel, offering fun and addiction.
**Battleships** – previously unreleased. Playable, but ultimately very limited.
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** – excellent conversion of the classic arcade game.

**OVERALL 62%**
Plenty of variety, but unfortunately many of the games offer limited enjoyment. It's also rather pricey.



## FIVE STAR GAMES III

**Beau Jolly, £9.95 cassette**

Contents:
**Uridium Plus +** – see *Four Smash Hits* for details.
**Exploding Fist** – ancient, but playable *Karate Champ* inspired beat 'em up.
**Trap Door** – unusual and attractive problem solving game.
**Tau Ceti** – absorbing 3D strategy shoot 'em up.
**Aliens** – excellent tie-in which captures the film's atmosphere.
**Firelord** – large arcade adventure with little to entertain.
**Strike Force Harrier** – a flight simulation with plenty of depth, but few thrills.

**OVERALL 80%**
Another varied package offering good range of games, but no outstanding titles.

SOMETHING HORRIFYING AND INE

# SCHWARZENEGGER

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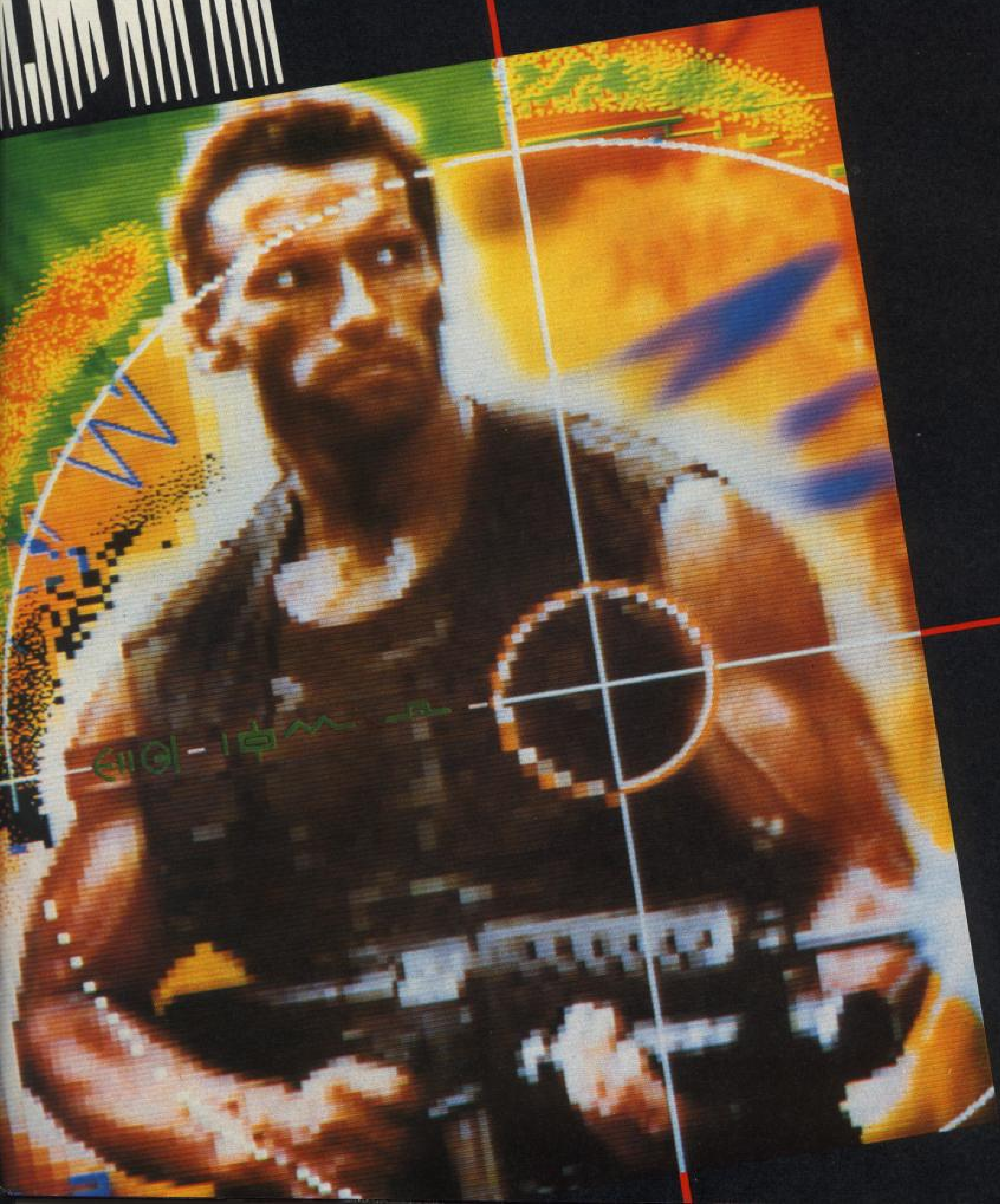
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# XPLICABLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN......

TM



# ZZAP! READERS'



## GAMES TOP 30

**1** *(1)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(13%)*
System 3

**2** *(4)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE** *(10%)*
Firebird

**3** *(9)* **CALIFORNIA GAMES** *(6%)*
US Gold/Epyx

**4** *(2)* **WIZBALL** *(5%)*
Ocean

**5** *(3)* **BARBARIAN** *(5%)*
Palace

**6** *(7)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD** *(4%)*
US Gold/Access

**7** *(5)* **LEADERBOARD** *(3%)*
US Gold/Access

**8** *(6)* **WORLD GAMES** *(3%)*
US Gold/Epyx

**9** *(12)* **KIKSTART II** *(2%)*
Mastertronic

**10** *(19)* **ZYNAPS** *(2%)*
Hewson

**11** *(8)* **GAUNTLET**
US Gold

**12** *(10)* **ELITE**
Firebird

**13** *(13)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird

**14** *(16)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

**15** *(14)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

**16** *(-)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE +**
Konami

**17** *(15)* **DELTA**
Thalamus

**18** *(11)* **URIDIUM**
Hewson

**19** *(30)* **RENEGADE**
Ocean

**20** *(24)* **BOULDERDASH**
Prism

**21** *(18)* **HEAD OVER HEELS**
Ocean

**22** *(22)* **ROAD RUNNER**
US Gold

**23** *(20)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen

**24** *(29)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE**
Martech

**25** *(23)* **I,BALL**
Firebird

**26** *(-)* **RED LED**
Reaktor

**27** *(-)* **QUEDEX**
Thalamus

**28** *(-)* **ARCADE CLASSICS**
Firebird

**29** *(-)* **SOLOMON'S KEY**
US Gold

**30** *(17)* **SANXION**
Thalamus



# ' CHARTS

## JANUARY 1988

## MUSIC TOP 10

**1** *(1)* **DELTA** *(36%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

**2** *(2)* **SANXION** *(12%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

**3** *(3)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(9%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

**4** *(4)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE** *(7%)*
Martech
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

**5** *(5)* **WIZBALL** *(6%)*
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

**6** *(9)* **GAME OVER** *(2%)*
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

**7** *(7)* **I,BALL** *(4%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

**8** *(6)* **GREEN BERET** *(5%)*
Imagine
Loading Music – Martin Galway

**9** *(8)* **ARKANOID** *(2%)*
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

**10** *(-)* **ARCADE CLASSICS** *(2%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

# PICTURE THIS

**With the increase and effective saturation of the computer industry with quality software, the need for similarly high quality advertising has arisen.**

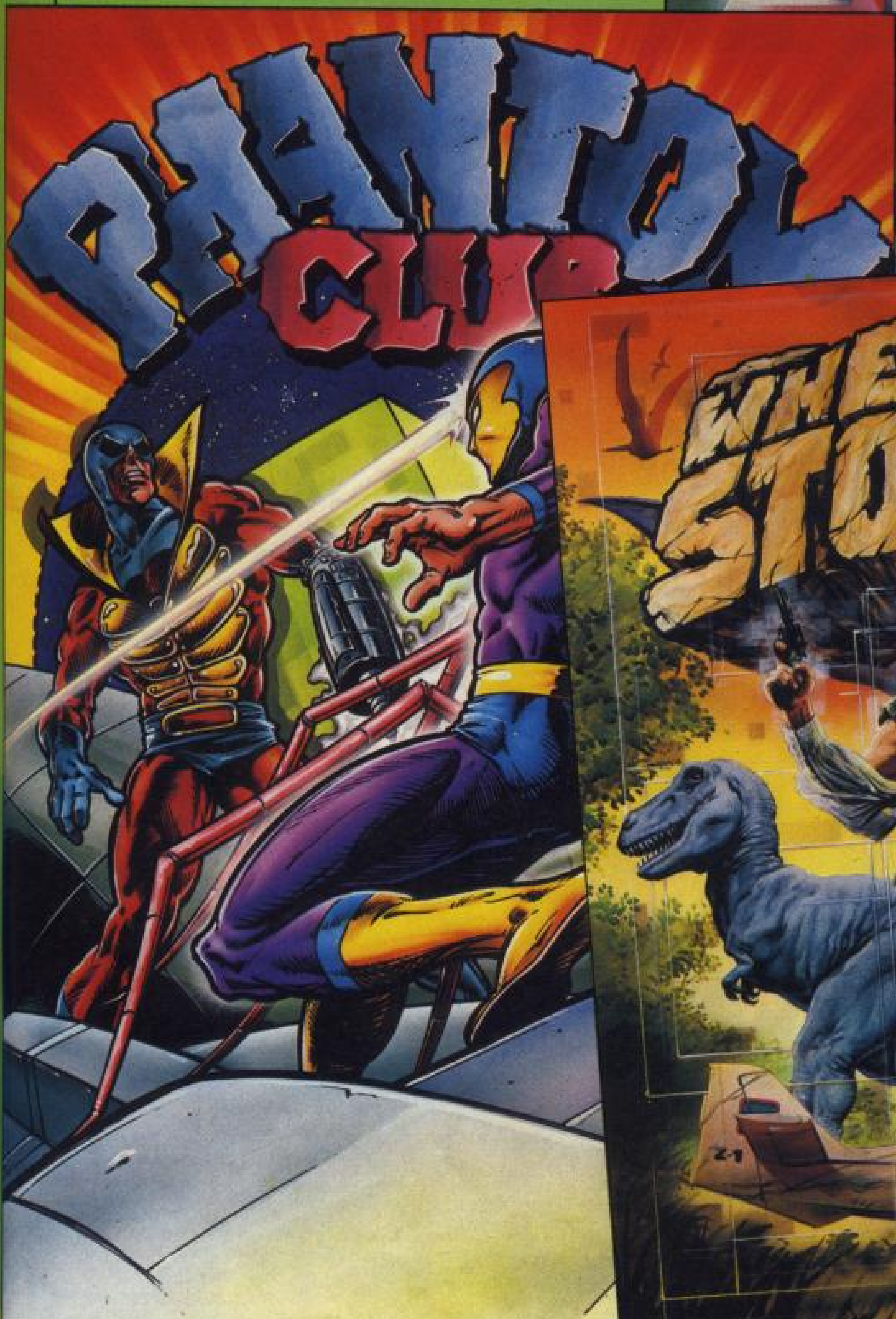
**The content of most computer games; alien species, intergalactic battles, underwater explorations and the like, give rise for the need of a graphic representation by means other than photographic, simply because it's impossible to capture the actual subject matter on film. To this end, the artist has played an important role in the conception, look, and eventual growth of the home software industry. Steve Jarratt provides a brief insight into the lives of four top artists.**

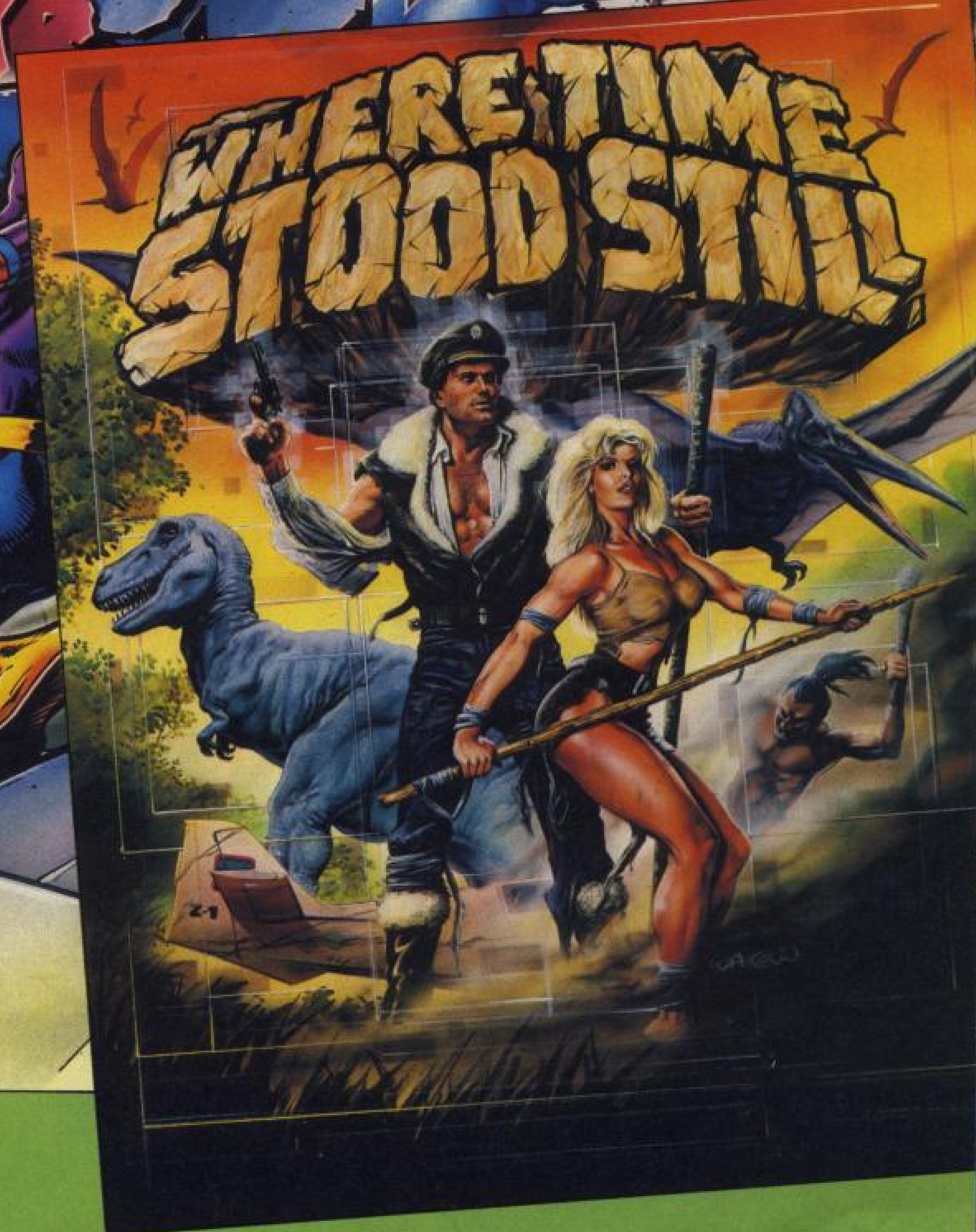
**BOB WAKELIN**

Unfortunately Bob Wakelin was unavailable for comment on his work, since his busy schedule means that he spends a lot of time in the States, where he does illustrations for American comics.

His work is used predominantly on Ocean and Imagine games and advertisements, where his photo-realist airbrushed paintings are amongst the best in the industry.



## TONY ROBERTS

Tony Roberts is 37, lives with his wife and family in Hove, and has been a professional illustrator since leaving art college in 1972. He studied at Ravensbourne, and on completing a course at Wolverhampton, left to go freelance. He has worked in advertising for a while, but heavily influenced by surrealism and his love of fantasy paintings (such as those by Hieronymous Bosch), he was prompted to begin illustrating science fiction book covers, a career he has successfully continued to date.

Occasionally Tony gets the chance to express his ideas in other ways: a 1969 cover for the Radio Times featured an original illustration of a Russian spy-satellite zapping an American one for a forthcoming Panorama program on SDI, which was received to some acclaim at the time.

In 1983, Roger Christian, production designer for *Star Wars* and *Alien* (for which he won an Oscar), asked Tony to work as concept illustrator for a film project, entitled *Quest*. Unfortunately, the project fell through but, impressed with his work, Roger contacted Tony again to work on *2084* – a follow-up to *1984* – which has been filmed in Australia and should be released at a future date. Tony provided designs for spaceships and a large citadel which features in the final cut.

He works primarily in designers' gouache but is also experimenting with a range of American liquid watercolours which allow him to create glazes of colour using his Aerograph '63' airbrush. Most of the detail is accomplished by painstaking brushwork, with the airbrush used to create highlights and 'finish off' – giving the artwork a polished appearance.

Tony paints on illustration board approximately 20x16 inches in size, and takes about ten days to complete a picture. The completed artwork is then airbrushed with a fine layer of Liquitex - an acrylic fixative which protects the surface and brings out the colours. Original Tony Roberts artwork usually sells for between £750 and £1,000.

Although claiming to be computer illiterate, his 16 year old son is an avid reader of ZZAP! and has a large collection of games.

'Game designers need professional artists to create the graphics', says Tony. 'All the games I've seen are very similar – there aren't any really dynamic computer graphics. It's the action; it's always straight-on or overhead views. They really need someone to go in and inject some new ideas.

'I have thought about doing some graphics for games, but I really love doing illustrations – it's my life.'






IX

## STEINAR LUND

Of Norwegian descent, Steinar Lund was born in Bergen in 1954, where he lived among the fjords and mountains for ten years until being forced to move to warmer climes. His father's new job with Thoresen car ferries induced the young viking to invade Southampton: he liked the place and has stayed there ever since.

Following the usual spell at school, Steinar went through sixth form, and left to begin work in his brother-in-law's chain of newsagents, working as a manager and then area manager. He finally left to begin a course in interior design at Kingston polytechnic, with an aim to designing shop interiors. He completed the course, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in the process, but found the heavily finance-oriented career too stifling and left in 1979 to spend the next year drawing dole and building up a portfolio of artwork.

Influenced by Salvador Dali, Magritte and later Chris Foss, Jim Burns and Tim White, his work centred on science fiction themes. In June of that year he met Roger Dean (*Yes* album covers) during an ill-fated science fiction encyclopaedia project, where Mr Dean described Steinar's work as 'mediocre'. At first depressed by this critique, it fired Steinar to work harder and produce pictures of a higher standard.

His earliest published work appeared in 1980, which involved commuting to and from Durban in South Africa to illustrate a series of humourous DIY books. This continued for the next three years during which time he made contact with the owners of Quicksilva, who commissioned him to produce his first software cover art for their game, *Defender*.

After producing covers for publishers Thorsons' New Age books (covering such diverse subjects as Yoga and Astrology) he finally became a full-time freelance illustrator in 1983 and his work can be seen gracing computer games, books, record covers and advertisements.

Steinar's pictures are mainly airbrushed, working with an Olympos SP-C, SP-B and an Aerograph 'Super 63'. Using a variety of media (Magic Colour inks, Pelican inks, Badger airbrush acrylics and Dr Martins's watercolours), he works on Schoellershammer 4G grade smooth art board. The finished painting is covered in an acetate film to protect it and his paintings usually take between three and five days to complete.

When playing computer games Steinar enjoys shoot 'em ups - preferring to vent his berserker tendencies on aliens rather than the populace of Southampton.

Steinar is also happy that cover artwork is being recognised as a valuable and integral part of the computer games industry. 'I'm not too worried about the sex and violence on game covers as long as they aren't too explicit. After all, heroic deeds are part of a young imagination, and where would a hero be without adversity and romance?'






ROCK CIRCUS

## DAVID ROWE

David John Rowe is 37 and lives with his wife and two children in an 11-roomed cottage in Llanddewi Brefi, near Tregaron in Dyfed, having recently moved from his previous home in Bishop's Waltham near Southampton (he and Steinar Lund are friendly rivals).

Born in 1950, David went to a Grammar school and began taking 'A' levels in Zoology, Botany and English during the 'swinging' sixties. In 1967 he dropped out of school and moved in with his wife-to-be Susan.

He then spent a few years on and off the dole, doing odd jobs (he helped build part of the M3 near Basingstoke) and nurturing his interest in art, creating wall murals with Susan in and around Southampton and eventually enrolling in a year-long foundation course at Southampton art college. On completing this he was successful in his application to Brighton, who were at that time accepting only one in 14 applicants! After the three year course, he emerged with a BA (Hons) for his pains.

Over the next few years, David spent a lot of his time doing 'tedious illustrations'. To supplement his income, in 1976 he began teaching life drawing and ended up doing this twice a week for seven years. 'This was the cornerstone of my art education: you're on the spot in front of students. You have to be able to back up everything you tell them – it really sharpens the mind'.

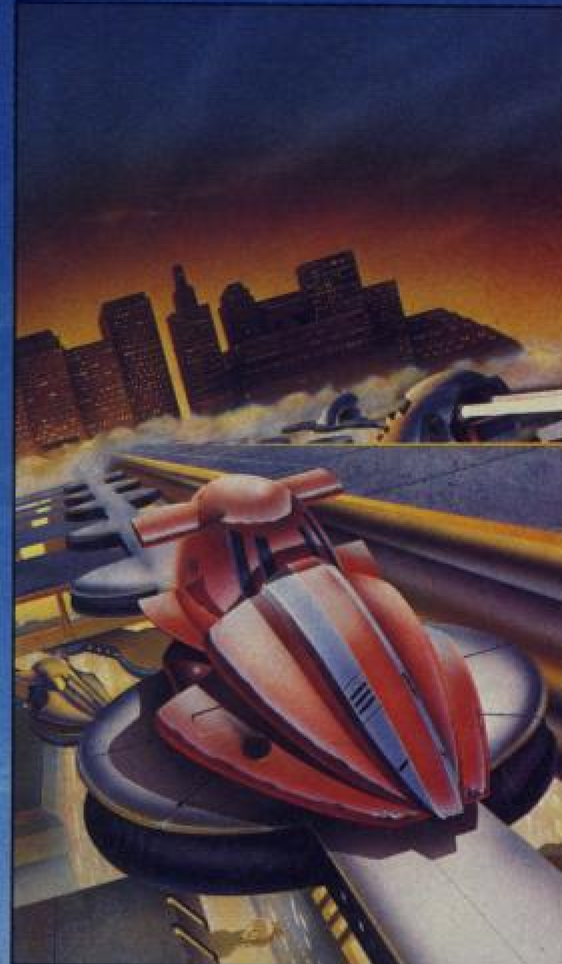
During this time, David bumped into Nick Lambert, a friend who he knew from Southampton. Nick had recently launched the Quicksilva label and asked David to create a full-colour cassette inlay for one of their games. In October '82, *Chessplayer* appeared with a David Rowe cover – one of the first to feature a full-colour illustration.

David looks back on his earlier efforts with a tinge of regret. 'You always ask yourself what pictures would have been like if you had done this differently or that had been altered. Usually, though the deadline decides it for you, but I'm happy with the *Hybrid* cover – it was a new direction for me'.

David's major claim to fame at the moment is the work he did for the television project, '*Knightmare*'. Two years ago Tim Child from Anglia TV approached him with an idea for a pilot show. David created several paintings and some acetate overlays to show that the concept was at least feasible. The show featured actors 'chromakeyed' into David Rowe paintings and was favourably received. A full-blown pilot followed and the series was given the go-ahead, David being commissioned to create some 24 paintings.

David airbrushes his pictures with an Aerograph 'Super 63' and Olympos airbrushes onto Frisk CS10 'Grafik 8' art board. Using mainly Magic Colour inks, he 'finishes off' by using acrylics, colour crayons, pastels and even scratching to the board beneath with a scalpel. Each picture usually takes about three days to complete, and David sells the copyright for around £350 a time.

When he isn't busy at work, David enjoys science fiction clay-pigeon shooting, and ripping out the dry rot in his kitchen.







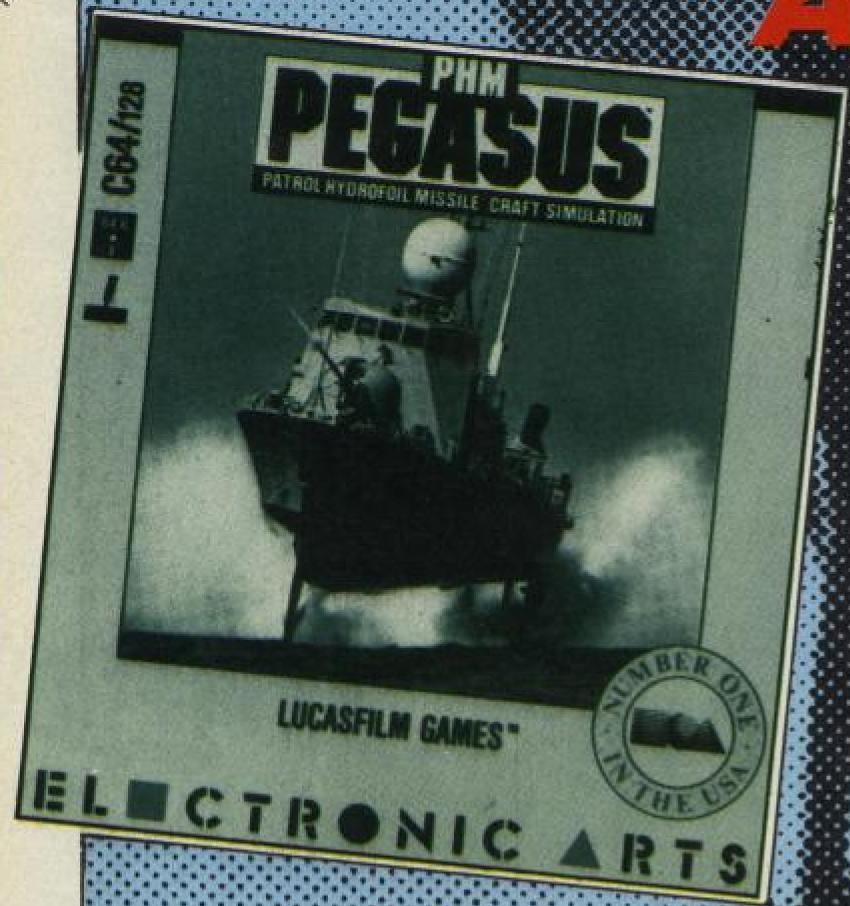
ZZAP! COMP

# WIN A SUPER DAY OUT FLOATING ABOVE THE GROUND

## AND COPIES OF PHM PEGASUS

## THANKS TO ELECTRONIC ARTS

'VERY CHRISTMASSY!...'






Electronic Arts' latest simulation from the Lucasfilm stable places you firmly in the Commander's chair of a hydrofoil missile craft . . .

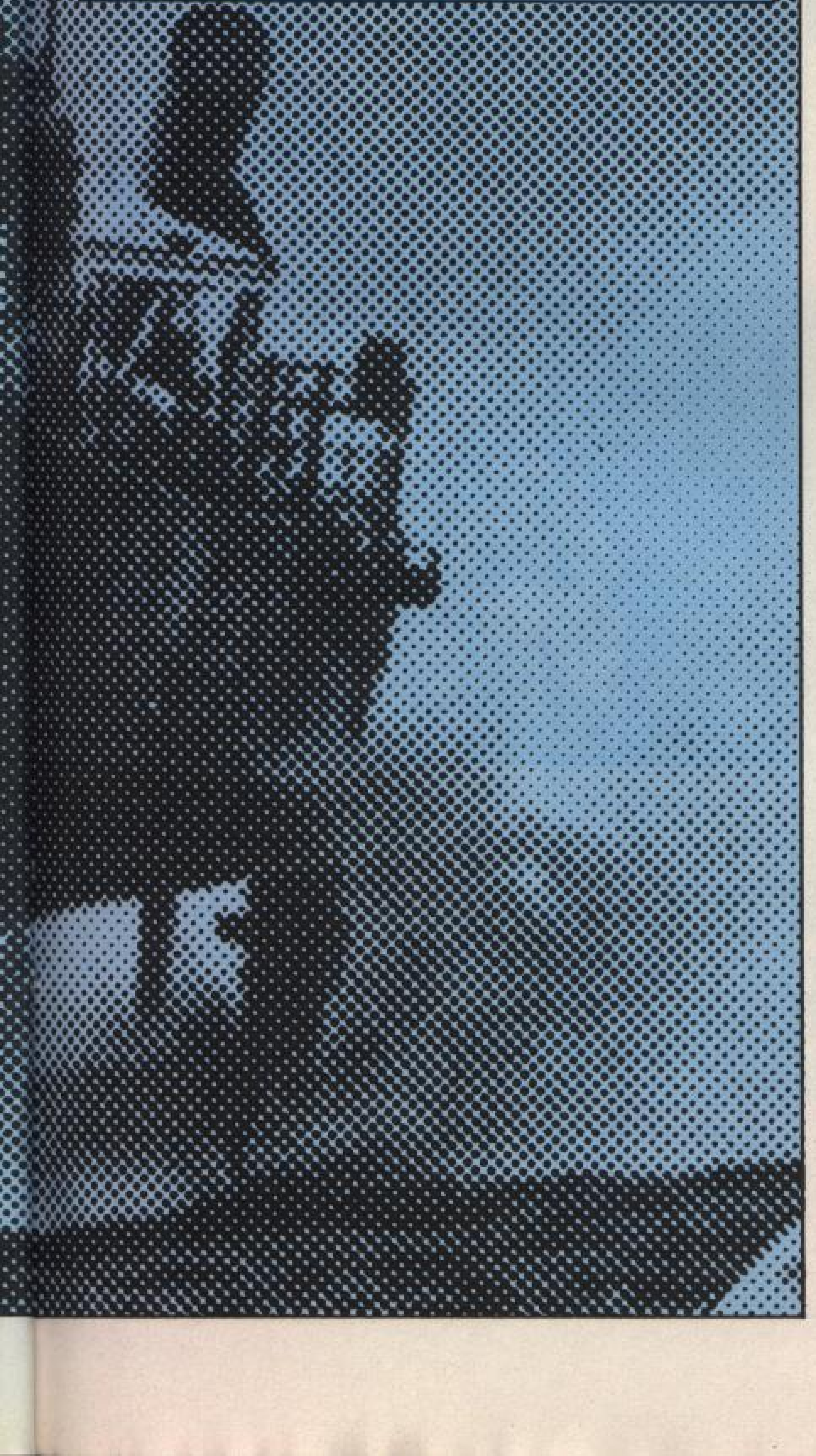
However, if it's the real thing you lust after, EOA have arranged a day out at the Brands Hatch Hoverschool, where the two lucky winners of this mega-comp will receive proper training in pilotting a hovercraft, and even indulge in some hovercraft races against a couple of boy racers from the ZZAP! team!

But (and this is a big but) EOA aren't giving it away for nothing – you have to earn it! What we want you to do is design a futuristic combat hovercraft. As ever, attention will be paid to the imaginative aspects – not necessarily how good the finished picture is – so even if you can't draw, get thinking!

There are also 20 runners-up prizes of copies of PHM Pegasus, which will be awarded to designs who just miss out on the action.

The finished picture, blueprints or full-scale working prototype models should be sent to the usual address: **HOVERCOMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than January the 14th, 1988.

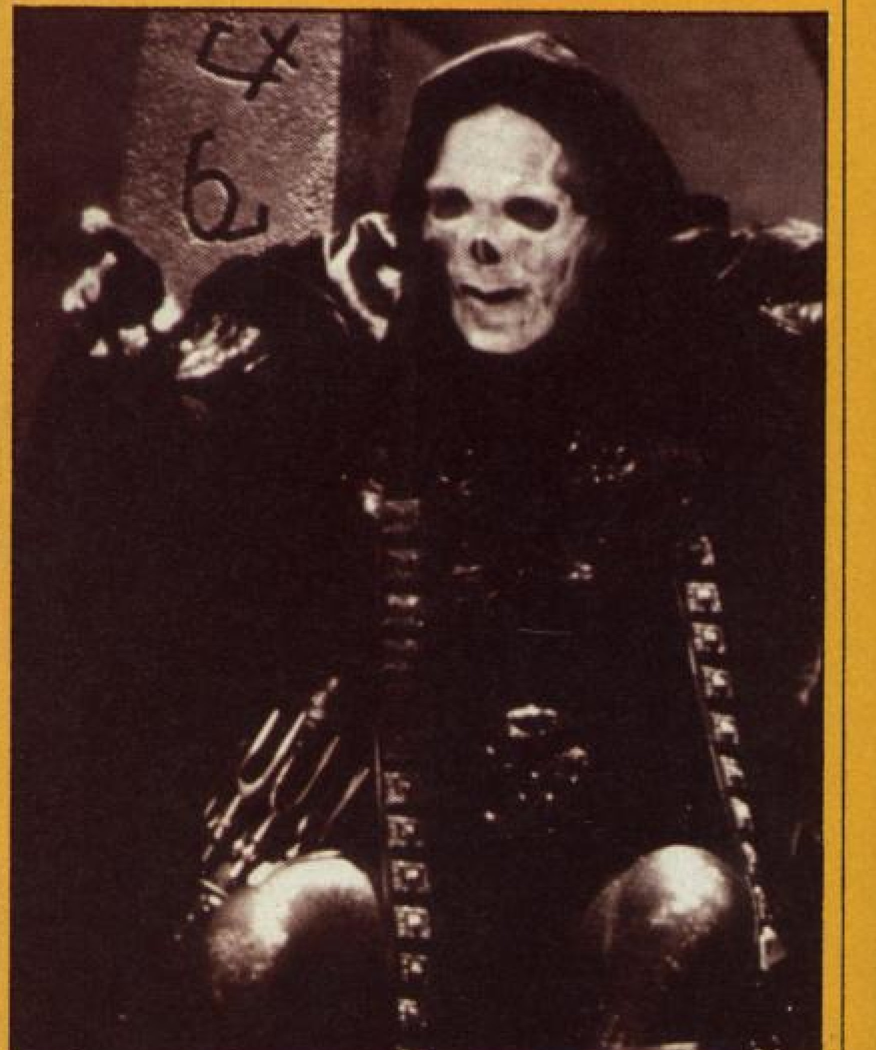
Please remember to include names, addresses and telephone numbers, so we can contact you as soon as possible.





# A HE-MAN IN THE MAKING

**The Masters Of The Universe characters have gone from strength to strength in recent years. Originally devised in 1982 by Mattel as a set of toy dolls, they sold so successfully that they were turned into a TV animation series which has since been syndicated around the world. This in turn proved a highly lucrative move, and there are now over 1,000 licensed Masters Of The Universe products currently available. The Cannon Group is about to release a $20 million full-length 'live action' film. Julian Rignall reports.**



When production of *Masters Of The Universe* first started, director Gary Goddard, author and director of the 'Conan' and '2010 Special Effects Show' – tourist trips at Universal Studios, California – knew exactly who he wanted to play the starring role of He-Man: Dolph Lundgren, who had previously starred opposite Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky IV*.

'It was obvious, even intimidating, that Lundgren was so right for the character,' says Goddard – and with his 6' 6" 240lb physique, it's difficult not to agree.

The role is an opportunity for Swedish-born Lundgren to aspire to new heights, and he feels it right for him, mostly because of He-Man's inner qualities: personal courage, mental agility and a refusal to give up despite the odds.

'He-Man is a nobleman, a leader and the quickest of the warriors,' says Lundgren. 'He's an old-fashioned hero of great strength, sensitivity and good humour – truly a Renaissance Man.'

Lundgren is himself a mixture of brawn and brain – while studying chemical engineering Sydney, Australia, he also became a karate black belt and later European Heavyweight Karate Champion. Returning to Sweden, Lundgren became an instructor in hand-to-hand combat and chemical warfare before receiving a scholarship in chemical engineering at Massachusetts Institute Of Technology (where Infocom was founded). But he never got there, a chance meeting with the coach who launched Matt Dillon on his career led to Lundgren taking up acting instead

Both Goddard and Lundgren have worked many changes into the *Masters Of The Universe* script to add more action sequences, and they significantly altered some of the characters and the mythology of the TV series, and both feel that He-Man's character has been strengthened as a result.

Countering good with evil is Skeletor, He-Man's most deadly enemy, played by Frank Langella, who starred as Dracula in the 1979 version of the film. He found the Skeletor character an interesting one, and spent a long time thinking about, and developing his personality.

'Skeletor is an intelligent, persuasive and strong individual, evenly matched to He-Man except for the hero's physical presence,' says Langella, 'but Skeletor is obsessed by obtaining more power and controlling He-Man. I took great care how Skeletor should be perceived, and am thrilled with the way he turned out.'

Getting into the Skeletor costume was a very time-consuming task, with over 30 different costume fitments to put on and take off at every shoot!

Evil-Lyn, Skeletor's partner-in-crime is played by Meg Foster, who also appeared in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Emerald Forest*. Again, a lot of thought went into the characterisation and her relationship with Skeletor.

'She has a deep love and respect for Skeletor, and while sometimes his patience with her is short, she is always there for him. I think the energy has turned out exactly the way that Gary, Frank and I envisioned it,' says Foster.



## THE STORY

The feature film *Masters Of The Universe* diverges from the cartoon's more traditional fantasy storyline – in fact Cannon's feature film has no connection with Filmation, who together with Mattel own the TV rights.

The action begins when the planet Eternia, formerly a paradise, is devastated by war. Skeletor and his sidekick Evil-Lyn, inhabitants of the planet's dark side, are determined to destroy the gentle Sorceress and the castle of Greyskull.

The story begins as the Sorceress, imprisoned within an inescapable energy field, is being drained of her power by Skeletor. Within 24 hours, her life force will be spent, and the power of Greyskull completely neutralised.

He-Man – with his entourage, Teela, a female warrior played by Chelsea Field and Man-At-Arms (John Cypher) – arrives from battle, and attempts to rescue the Sorceress, only to be beaten back by Skeletor's troops. They retreat to the house of Gwildor (Billy Barty), who gives them the Cosmic Key, which has the power to take them anywhere in the Universe. As Gwildor punches the code to take them to safety, a bolt of power alters the setting, and the group arrives on Earth, in the township of Colby, California.

In the confusion, the key is lost, to be later picked up by Julie Winston (Courtney Fox). Curiosity overcomes here, and she starts fiddling with it, setting off a force field that Skeletor and Evil-Lyn locate. Skeletor and a quartet of his most evil and powerful minions set off to capture He-Man . . .

What happens next? Well, you'll just have to go and see the film, which opens in London on December 29.

## THE GAME

Vying with Arnold Schwarzenegger for Muscliest Film Star On A Computer Game This Christmas Award is Dolph Lundgren. Schwarzenegger gets *Predator*, Dolph gets *Masters Of The Universe*.

The game of *Masters* is being programmed by Gremlin Graphics's top team, and they say they are sticking quite closely to the film's plot.

The action starts with the computerised He-Man running around the vertically scrolling streets of Colby, looking for notes to the Cosmic Key which can return him to Eternia. These must be discovered within an allotted time span, but he is continually disturbed by Skeletor's evil warriors who warp in and out of existence – from Eternia – and whom He-Man has to shoot. Throughout this section He-Man receives messages from his friends, Teela, Man-At-Arms and Gwildor, telling him of any important news. These bulletins provide the game's principal structure, as they direct He-Man to four sub-games.

The first of these is a fight with two of Skeletor's henchmen, Blade and Karg, in a scrapyard. Next comes a shoot-out at Charlie's Music Store, in which He-Man shoots at enemies popping up across a street. The third sub-game is another shoot-'em-up, with He-Man tackling a multitude of Skeletor's cronies aboard a flying disc. Following that, He-Man flexes his muscles in readiness for a final confrontation with Skeletor at the edge a bottomless pit – there can be only one survivor.




► **A screenshot from *Masters Of The Universe* – the game, coming soon from Gremlin Graphics**

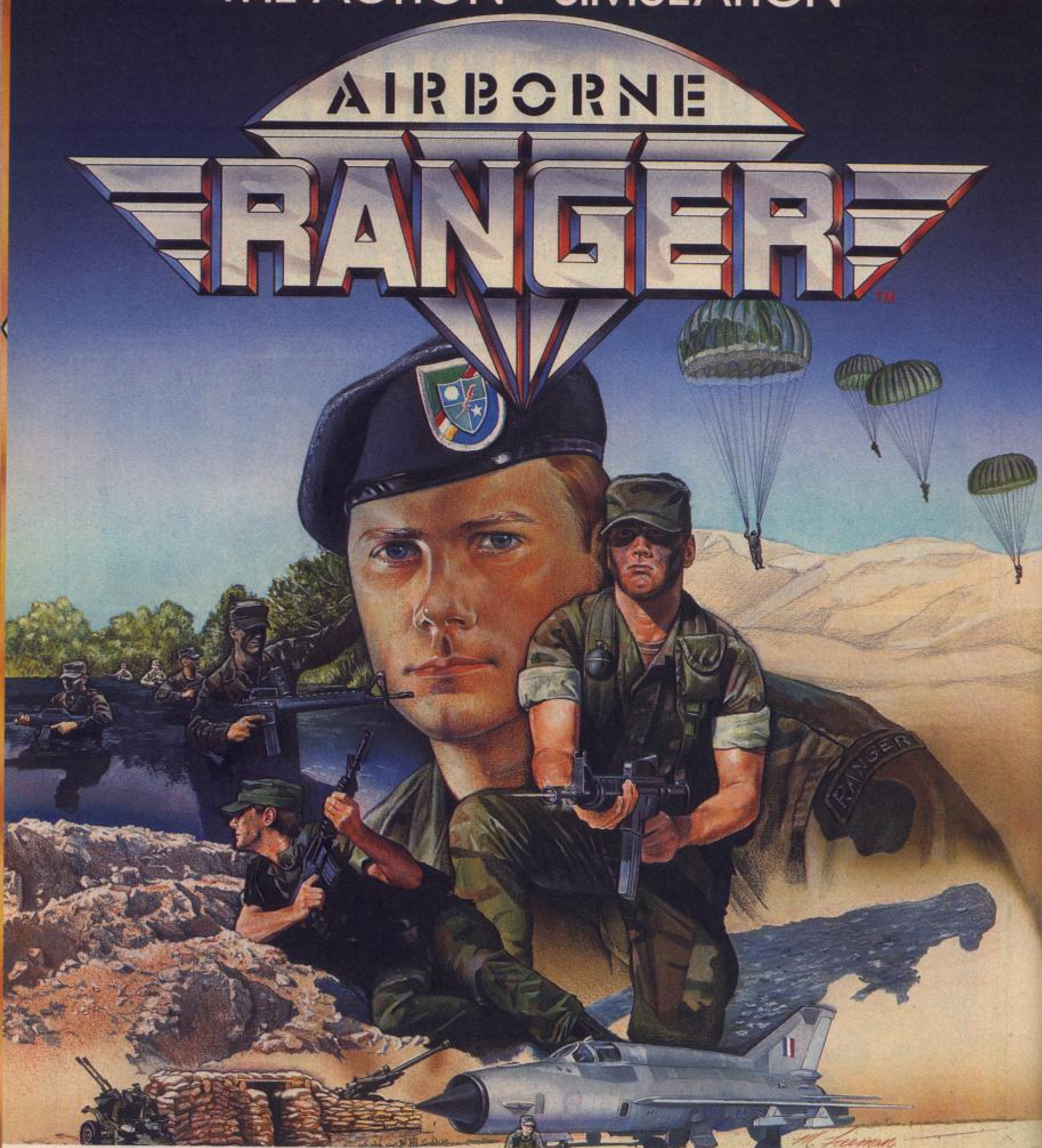
He-Man is given one note of the tonal sequence for the Cosmic Key for each episode he manages to complete, and can find one in the streets before each encounter. The eighth note is not collected for besting Skeletor, though, but is given earlier for making the right response to Skeletor's demands – He-Man fights with Skeletor only after all eight notes are in his possession.

Gremlin Graphics hope to have the game finished in time for the New Year, so keep an eye out for a review next issue.



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# MANOEUVRES

### With Philippa Irving



## THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT? 3D

For the first time, Manoeuvres comes to you directly from the keyboard of an Amstrad PC. Some friends and I (including John Woods who writes for THE GAMES MACHINE) are starting a PBM company and have invested in this computer to use as a word processor for our first release, a role-playing game called *Revenge of the many-legged Man Eating Mutant Tiger Hounds from Outer Space.* I'm largely responsible for the conception and design of this masterpiece, and I'll be moderating it.

One of the things that we've all discovered while attempting to describe our new enterprise to friends, relatives, landlords and accountants, is the near impossibility of communicating the concept to those who have never heard of play-by-mail games or role-playing. The last line of the conversation is usually a bewildered, 'And they PAY you for this?'.

I should imagine that most readers of Manoeuvres have experienced a similar sort of difficulty in trying to make the uninitiated understand the value of entertainment software. When I tell someone that I make a living writing for a computer games magazine, and even go into some detail about what it is I actually do, I feel certain that days or weeks later the same person, on meeting a computer boffin, seeing an item on 'Tomorrows World' or coming across an IBM at work, will say, 'It meant nothing to me, but of course you know all about computers, so I thought you could explain it.' It's hopeless to protest that my Spectrum Basic is limited to LOAD "" and Commodore Basic to LOAD"*"8,1; even if they begin to grasp that really, honestly, all I ever do is play games, the reaction is likely to be hostile.

For a start, many peoples' experience of computer games is limited to, and coloured by the arcade machine blasting away in the corner of the pub, and a folk memory of *Space Invaders*. Therefore it's difficult to convince someone who has never seen a modern home computer that many are more refined than the conversation-interrupting monstrosity next to the only free table. It's almost impossible to make them believe that one can get the same degree of intellectual challenge and satisfaction from a strategy or adventure game as one can from a crossword or traditional board game, and that such games can be every bit as worthwhile and 'wholesome'.

This frustrates me sometimes, particularly as I know that there's a respect in which computer games can be unwholesome. I wrote about it a couple of months ago: the addictive effect the best and worst of them can have on the player's mind.

Another 'syndrome of misunderstanding' is the 'use of a home computer' fallacy. It's been sufficiently stated elsewhere before now that a home computer has no use except as a flexible games machine – for a home computer like the Commodore, anyway. Anyone who has any personal contact with the facts of the matter knows that the one-time ideas, which are still current in uninformed minds, about using a home computer to regulate the central heating or store addresses are nonsensical. The Commodore doesn't even make a particulary effective word processor.

Those of us who are interested in strategy games ought to make an attempt to convince others of their value. The less misunderstanding there is, the more people are likely to try these games, enjoy them and buy them. ▶



# BATTLES IN NORMANDY

**SSG, £14.95 disk**

Last month I reviewed SSG's *Russia*. Their latest release, *Battles In Normandy* is in outward appearance a similar production. Having grappled with the meaty orders system of the former game, and more or less got to grips with the branching menus, I expected familiarising myself with *Battle In Normandy* would be less work. However, although the general presentation is much the same, and the on-screen appearance and packaging identical, there are many subtle and not-so-subtle differences that make *Battles In Normandy* far different from *Russia*.

The game comes in the same type of substantial fold-open card wallet as *Russia*, with an 80-page rulebook, reference cards printed with diagrams of the branching menus that run the proceedings, a glossy full-colour map and that thoughtful touch, a strip of labels for your save game disks. I have to make a special mention of the map, because – with the somewhat irrelevant exception of the little toolkit I got in the packaging of *Autoduel* – it is probably the best quality component extra I've seen in a wargame. It shows Normandy, simplified into small hexes of many different types of terrain, and having diagrammatic boxes enclosing the areas in play on the screen for each scenario.

In a connected series of eight scenarios – for some reason there isn't a grand campaign game – *Battles In Normandy* recreates the British invasion of Normandy and the battles that were fought around the beach-heads they created. The historical analysis in the rulebook describes this campaign, from the Allies' point of view, as a 'strategic success and a tactical failure' rather than the unqualified triumph of popular conception. Recreating the actual situation is of very great importance in this game – it comes closer to being a simulation of history than most computer wargames even attempt – and this explains the complexity and the vagueness of its victory conditions. Because the Allied invasion of Normandy was a success, a player who chooses to land himself with the Axis powers in any scenario is likely to fail in an overall sense. Victories are won and lost on points rather than the achievement of specific goals, and points are won by capturing and hanging onto 'objectives'. Capturing the objectives is not as important as retaining them, for each give points per turn. Some aren't valuable for the whole length of the scenario and only give points between specified turns. This system of rewards manages to create an atmosphere of frantic ground-grabbing – the player is advised to catch and keep every objective in sight – and it gives each scenario more flexibility than rigid conditions would.

The player can either choose sides, or set the computer against itself in 'observe' mode. Handicaps can be set either way, and act as a multiplier on victory points rather than the deployment strength or artificial intelligence routine. After these brief preliminaries, the player is free to wade through the apparently interminable tangle of menus in an attempt to make sense of the system.

There is a rather desperate sounding assurance in the manual that it all becomes perfectly simple in the end – this is true. The menus become lightning fast to manipulate, but you do have to put in quite a bit of careful studying of their function. I'm not sure that the 'tutorial' scenario is a great deal of help. It takes the bewildered beginner carefully step-by-step through 'Sword', one of the simple scenarios, but only tells one what buttons to press, rather than why. Since the rulebook is in a format virtually identical to *Russias*, I knew there was a detailed and comprehensive breakdown of the function of each menu in the next chapter, and I found myself continually referring forward to that as the tutorial brought me up against a new menu without explaining it.

There are sixteen different kinds of battalions, although they're not all necessarily available in a single scenario. The player is conceived as operating from a fairly lofty position in the chain of command, and controls a regiment rather than a battalion. Regiments are made up of battalions, appearing on the map and in reports as individual units, but the player doesn't have the power to specify in which hex each ends up. Orders are given to the regiment, and the battalions attempt to follow them as best they can.

Each day is divided into four turns – AM, noon, PM and nite (*sic*) – so the timescale is quite a small one. During night turns you're not really supposed to wake your men up and force them to do things unless there's a pressing reason for it, so the action menus available for these turns are structured differently from the daytime turns to provide some degree of protection against inadvertently depriving the troops of sleep. This adds a feeling of shading and reality to the inevitably artificial turn system, and drama too – the 'Sword' scenario opens in the middle of the night, after the 6th airborne division has just landed on the beach and is planning to attack the Merville battery at 2.00 am.

The regimental orders given depend very much on the position the regiment happens to be in. Its combat state is either 'ready', 'contact' or 'engaged' which is a general description of how close it is to the enemy. In a merely 'ready' state, before it has had sight of the enemy, it can be told to rest (to recover fatigue points), move forward to one of the objective hexes, seek a particular enemy battalion or deploy itself defensively around its current position. When in 'contact', after the enemy has been spotted but before it is very close, the regiment can choose from two severities of defensive action or launch a limited 'probe' attack on the nearest battalion. When 'engaged', a battalion is practically on top of the enemy, and attacks in three different ways or prepares itself for a really effective assault in the next turn. The sophistication is apparent, and the player has no control over what sort of combat state any battalion is in. The uncertainty of a real campaign, when events take on a life of their own and the leaders do not have the simplified God-like control of a wargamer, is suggested.

All orders can be manipulated until the player selects Run 5, which processes the turn. One distinct irritation about the presentation of *Battles In Normandy* is the lack of any description of orders given to regiments. It's easy to forget when you are controlling a large number what you told each to do, and indeed if you remembered to hand out orders to everyone.

Like *Russia*, *Battles In Normandy* offers a comprehensive design program as a major feature. Creating an entirely new scenario is a big project, but there are suggestions for minor, historically plausible variations to introduce into each predesigned scenario. The adventurous can draw an entirely new map, using the building blocks of the 16 terrain hexes, and the details of forces and deployment can be varied to an infinite degree. Conceivably, one could concoct a very strange and unrealistic situation, but serious users are more likely to want to type in the scenarios printed in the company's magazine *Run 5*.

The rulebook covers all aspects of play thoroughly. Although the tutorial isn't as helpful as it might be, the required information is found in the next chapter and the historical background material is abundant. The setting of each scenario is analysed at length, and possible tactics suggested briefly.

As before, and at the risk of repeating myself, I have to say that this is an extremely worthwhile purchase. There's hours of play in it, and designing your own scenarios is a possible hobby for life.

**PRESENTATION 95%**
Bridges the gap between computer and board wargames.

**GRAPHICS 60%**
Dull, and slightly confusing.

**RULES 96%**
Detailed scenario analysis, full explanations of all aspects of the game system, and every other kind of help and support.

**AUTHENTICITY 90%**
The system of capturing objectives instead of winning outright adds greatly to the atmosphere.

**PLAYABILITY 86%**
Some work is needed to get to grips with the menu system, but after that play becomes easy and fascinating.

**OVERALL 90%**
Another Sizzler for SSG, and a game entirely worthy of purchase.



# OGRE

**Microprose/Origin, £19.95 disk only**

Ogre describes itself as a strategy wargame, and I suppose it is a wargame insofar that it deals with the systematic destruction of a war machine by other war machines – but the supertanks employed in *Ogre* are entirely fictional. This isn't a fault by any means – *Ogre* has a classic concentration, simple where it helps the gameplay and complex where it makes things interesting.

We are, in concept at least, on the battlefields of the 21st century. The predominance of small-scale nuclear weapons have made infantry troops rather too expensive and cumbersome to use in battle, and defences against long-range missiles have become so sophisticated and widespread that they're no longer an option. The development of a new kind of wonder metal means that tanks are back in fashion, the most advanced kind being a 50 metre long 'cybernetic attack vehicle' – the *Ogre*.

The action takes place on an unidentified battlefield. There is no assumption, not even an implicit one, of an East-West conflict, and the situation is highly stylised. The Defender, who is always the player, has a command post and an assortment of mechanised tanks. The Ogre, the single piece controlled by the computer, is out to destroy the command post.

A very simple hex map fills two screens. It's glaring white, which I found fatiguing to look at for a period of time, and its blankness is interrupted only by a few unclear squint lines which are intended to represent rubble, and a sprinkling of red circles which denote craters. The rubble lines, which are not particularly distinct, run between hexes and prevent a piece moving from one to another. Hexes with craters in them can't be entered at all.

Actions are selected from a series of pull-down menus, and are carried out by pressing fire. At the start, the player chooses a 'field' – merely a particular arrangement of rubble and craters on the hex map – and deploys his forces. For a quick start, there's a choice of five preset fields with the defences already deployed, and a further five predesigned maps which allow the user to place his units as desired. The third alternative is for those who like to play around with editor programmes and make an entirely new 'scenario'. I'm not convinced that the shape of the map has much effect on the outcome of the game, but the type of tanks chosen and their arrangement certainly does.

Against the single computer-controlled Ogre, the Defender has a range of five weapons. The capabilities of these are defined by five parameters: attack strength, attack range, defence strength and movement. Attack strength determines the percentage chance of hitting the Ogre, attack range determines how many hexes ahead the missile weapons travel, defence strength is the measure of how resistant they are to attack, and movement is self-explanatory. Heavy tanks have a high attack strength and are fairly strong, but their range is short. Missile tanks have less chance of doing damage and are slower, but they have a longer range. Howitzer tanks have a range far wider than the Ogre's own, and are extremely accurate, but are almost defenceless and can't move at all. Ground effect vehicles are super-fast – they actually have two movement phases in one turn – but are moderate on other abilities. Finally, the player has some infantry at his disposal, and disposal is usually the operative word.

The defending player has quite an assortment of these weapons at the ready, all ranged against a single enemy piece. But the Ogre is a thoroughly nasty collection of hit points and has four clusters of weapons, each equivalent to an ordinary tank, two missiles, one main battery, four secondary batteries, and eight anti-personnel. In addition it can move at a speed of three hexes per turn. The defender's task is to wear the Ogre down weapon by weapon, chipping away at its attacking strength and attempting to slow it down by blowing up its caterpillar tracks.

The action takes place in turns of multiple phases, with the defence moving first. Details about each piece may be accessed, and it can be moved if required. The Ogre's details can also be examined – useful, since a knowledge of the Ogre's state is essential when the attack is planned.

If you try to exit the movement phase without having moved all your pieces, you're asked to confirm this decision. A similar query at the end of the firing phase is very useful, but I found it irritating here. Quite often it's tactically acceptable to leave tanks in position.

Having manoeuvred the defence weapons, the player gets to fire at the Ogre. Moving tanks close is essential, but it also means that in its firing phase, the Ogre fires back. Each tank has a choice of shooting at one of the Ogre's weapon banks in an attempt to take them out, or going for the treads to slow it down. The Ogre has forty-five treads, and every fifteen destroyed means one less movement point per turn. It's fairly important to attempt immobilisation, because even if the Ogre is stripped of its weapons, it can simply roll over the command centre and crush it.

Depending on the target's attack and defence strength, a tank has a percentage chance of hitting a weapon of its choice. The powerful Howitzer tank has 100% chance of hitting the poorly-defended anti-personnel weapon, while the Ground Effect Vehicle has only a 17% chance of destroying the main battery. This percentage chance is increased by combining the attacking force of several tanks. Any number of tanks can aim at the same target and increase the chance of hitting it, but the effect will be the same as if a single tank has made a lucky roll, and the firepower of the extra tanks, who only get one shot per turn, might well have been wasted. All tanks have a 33% chance of hitting the treads, but they can't combine firepower on the target.

This clearly-defined percentage chance-to-hit system is well suited to the game's stylised nature, although it seemed to me that the Ogre managed to hit my tanks much more often than I managed to hit it! One major advantage which the Ogre has is the ability to disable the player's tanks on a 'roll', where the same result for the player just 'glances' the Ogre, and has no effect. So every time the Ogre hits, it does some effective damage.

The multiple choice of targets – the different ways in which you can attempt to cripple the Ogre before it reaches its target – makes for a satisfying variety of strategies. The instruction booklet is substantial and deals with the mechanical aspects of the game thoroughly, including tables which makes it clear how the computer calculates combat results. A second book in the package goes into the tactical theory of the game, under the pretence of being a manual for command post commanders, and it makes interesting reading after you've played a few times and got a grasp of what this involves in practice.

Personally, if I was in charge of this battlefield I would make sure that the helpless command post was properly fortified so that it couldn't be crushed by the Ogre in such a casual way, and I'd have another Ogre – or two – lined up to meet the enemy. But it's not fair to take the scenario too literally – as a game it works very well indeed.

**PRESENTATION 70%**
The packaging is substantial, but this is offset by the awkwardness of the mouse-style control system.

**GRAPHICS 51%**
Highly unimaginative.

**RULES 87%**
The rulebook itself is methodical, and the 'notes and tactics' book makes useful and fascinating reading.

**AUTHENTICITY 60%**
The 'rules and tactics' book attempts to generate an atmosphere, and the rationale behind the futuristic war machines is explained - but this is very much a game.

**PLAYABILITY 85%**
Easy to pick up, and absorbing.

**OVERALL 86%**
Well worth investigating.



# ANNALS OF ROME

**PSS, £12.95 cass, £17.95 disk**

*Annals of Rome*'s scenario represents the ultimate in long-range wargaming. Strategically planning the invasion of a country over a period of months telescopes into invisible detail in the epic backdrop, and in this game you're responsible for the construction and maintenance of the whole Roman empire. There's something breathtaking about the grandeur of this design, which caught my imagination when I reviewed this on the Spectrum at the beginning of the year, and I'm disappointed to find that it has mysteriously lost most of its inexplicable playability in its translation to the Commodore.

Several elements combine untidily to produce a simulation of the historical conditions which moulded the fate of nations in general, and Rome in particular. There are economic forces, represented in an ineffectual way by a selectable tax rate and a treasury full (or otherwise) of gold. There are personalities, providing unexpected human interest in a saga which you might expect to be remote from the affairs of individuals, and, of course, there is military conquest.

The game opens in 273BC, by which time the Roman Republic had gained control of Italy itself and was poised to conquer the rest of the ancient map. The main display shows a rather squashed version of what the known world looked like around this time which is thankfully supplemented by a map in the rulebook. Rome's rival powers are spread across it, their dominion of regions indicated by a race-specific pattern. When the game opens, the Gauls' heavy black dots are smeared over most of Europe and I learned from experience that it was expedient and fairly easy to crush their dominance as soon as possible.

Before going into combat, the token economics phase gives the player the chance to set the tax rate between one and two for the next phase. A high tax rate induces unpopularity, and the popularity of a regime is an important determiner of stability. I was unconvinced that being poor had any detrimental effect on me anyway, and the rulebook is most unclear on the matter.

Next, the player is presented with a roll-call of Roman VIP's. There are 21 characters at any one time, and they all have individual, convincing-sounding Roman names like Tiberius Cato and Aurelius Maximus (of course, to be pedantic about it, Romans had three names, not two). They all start out as senators, but can be turned into commanders, legates and governors. Each has a personality of his own which is defined by ability and loyalty ratings. They age naturally, and as they die from phase to phase they are replaced automatically. The first personnel decision the player makes is whom to appoint governor of Rome. Choosing a senator with a low loyalty rating will almost inevitably mean treachery, but this needn't always be a bad thing.

If the popularity of the regime is low, and it can drop far below zero, a more damaging kind of treachery is possible – a governor in charge of a large force of legions can decide to rebel and rampage across the empire to take power in Rome. There's nothing to stop several governors deciding to do this simultaneously, and in fact a phase – the civil war phase – is set aside for it. Part of the army usually remains loyal to the state, and this means that you waste resources fighting yourself. Civil war can be devastating, and to be avoided if possible it's dangerous to put any governor, however high his loyalty, in charge of too many men.

At the start of the game, Italia sits by itself on the map, surrounded by enemy empires and possessed of a highly efficient fighting force. Legionary forces are so much better-organised than the rabble of the rest of the World that they have little difficulty in defeating them, even when outnumbered two to one. In the combat phase, each region of the world – and there are twenty-eight of them – takes its turn in random order. The player has to watch the rest of the world fighting its own battles in the initial turns, and the Spectrum version of this stage was infuriatingly slow. It has been speeded up considerably in the Commodore version, but clumsily. A disconcerting absence of sound effects of any kind makes it difficult to follow what's going on. It's ridiculous, of course, to expect the conquest of countries to be accompanied by any sort of appropriate noise, and I remember I made a sarcastic comment about the one supplied with the Spectrum version, but silence is worse.

When Italia gets its chance, the choice is fairly simple: do nothing or send the legionaries marching into an adjacent region and claim it. Each country has only one move per turn, but if you capture a country before it's had its move then its turn falls under your control. This means that the order in which the countries move become of paramount importance, and luck determines whether you can capture five territories in one phase or only one.

The presence of an enemy in a country is indicated by a number, counting in units of ten thousand. Confusingly, the Roman armies are counted and shown in units of five thousand. To take control of a territory the Roman army has to eliminate all opposition, which, as long as you're careful in using a large enough force, it usually has little difficulty in doing. The resolution of combat has been speeded up again, and is now too quick to be interesting, and once more it's conducted in eerie silence.

Once conquered, Roman possessions are under external and internal threat. Adjacent enemy powers attempt to take them from the player, and if the province is the homeland of a particular race, the native population raise a sizeable army of ploughshare-wielding peasants and attempt to rebel turn after turn. Holding onto a homeland is tricky, but it's worth it because gradually you can starve an enemy race out of existence. Without access to their treasury, they can't raise real troops and, sat on for a sufficient number of decades, they dwindle and die. The most powerful threat to the empire comes from outside the map, from the masses of barbarians who appear in historically-scheduled waves in astronomical numbers and who always win in the end. They are unstoppable largely because they're uncontrollable.

With some tactical practice it is not difficult to bring the whole map under Roman control within a respectable number of turns. The difficulty lies in keeping it that way, with the threat of civil war and native rebellion always simmering underneath the organised exterior, and the threat of barbarian invasion on the horizon. Theoretically it's possible to sustain the Roman empire long past its historical downfall, though the forces operating against you are overwhelmingly powerful. Although the Roman legionaries start out in 273BC as the best soldiers in the world, by the time the Vandals and the Huns arrive in the fifth century their methods are old-fashioned, and the barbarian hordes have attained a degree of sophistication which matches them equally. There's no such thing as winning in this game.

The grand sweep of the scenario is inspiring, but there are several odd things wrong with the Commodore version. The lack of sound is a more serious deficiency than I could have imagined, the population breakdown of each region is missing, and so, more seriously, is the phase which explained how many troops were being recruited from various regions. To my surprise, the result is a piece of software that is even more shoddily presented than its Spectrum counterpart, and so uncongenial that it was unable to recreate the same fascination, or ensnare me with its addictive gameplay. Compared to the high standard of much software available for the Commodore, *Annals of Rome* makes a poor showing.

**PRESENTATION 49%**
Stylistically incongruous, and having a confusing turn structure.

**GRAPHICS 60%**
Some of the lettering is too small to be legible, and the main map is cluttered and untidy.

**RULES 65%**
There are some useful tables and charts, but the rules are ill-arranged and difficult to consult.

**AUTHENTICITY 80%**
The author's knowledge of Roman history is well imparted.

**PLAYABILITY 64%**
The poor presentation defeats what can be an addictive game.

**OVERALL 68%**
An interesting idea and a good game, rather disappointing in its Commodore incarnation.



# DESPATCHES

**This is much more like it! I'm pleased to announce that at last people are writing to me. Keep it up! Ian Robinson of London suggested something that I've suspected, that my mailbag is small because only a relatively few Commodore users have disk drives, and a lot of the games reviewed in Manoeuvres are disk only. If that's the case, then, cassette owners – write and complain about it!**

**Dear Philippa,**
**I had to chatter away on my typewriter (actually it's my mum's) to write and complain about the letter sent by Jim Harrison, printed in Issue 29. Being an avid wargamer both computer and board, I have to say that I definitely prefer a good board wargame to a computer simulated one. However, don't get me wrong, there are many excellent computer wargames available on the market today, but the variety and scope is very limited, especially for someone like me who only has a tape deck. As well as the lack of variety, the computer wargames also have several other distinct disadvantages.**

**For a start the playing pieces look highly unrealistic and some parts of the playing area often bear no resemblance whatsoever to the actual terrain, whereas I think you will find that most board games have extremely realistic and historically accurate maps. With computer war games there is no variety in opponents and strategy. I also believe that staring at a monitor screen for hours on end is most unsociable.**

**Until the standard of computer war games rises, the board war games will remain at the top as a much more sociable, realistic, exciting and tense way of war gaming.**

**I would also like to add that just recently you have been claiming that graphics are not so important in strategy games. I disagree with this view because even if the game is brilliant, enjoyment is detracted if ugly graphics are used throughout the long duration of war game play.**

**Do you think any of the older war games will be released on a budget range?**
**Steven Dawes, Hove, E Sussex**

*In value for money terms, it has to be admitted that board games have the advantage over computer games. The quality of physical components in a board game is inevitably higher, and personally I love fiddling about with the seven hundred and thirty-eight cardboard counters which always look so neat and simple before they've been pressed out of their sheets. Strong, colourful and detailed maps also appear, and more importantly, so do complex and comprehensive rules of the type that might fill a textbook and make a single turn last an afternoon, but which would be impossible to implement within the limitations of a computer's memory. The disadvantages of board gaming are sufficiently obvious. You have to have a major commitment of time and you have to have someone to play with. Computer games can be played solitaire and at one's own leisure. There are some computer games – admittedly, only for the privileged class of disk owners – which come close to a compromise between the convenience of the computer and the complexity and presentation of the board. I've been very impressed by the SSG products I've seen.*

**Dear Philippa,**
**First I'd like to say how thrilled I am, to see a strategy section back in these pages.**

**Recently I borrowed a friend's Spectrum and bought a copy of Firebird's *Rebelstar* – it's fantastic! I can beat it only losing two men on its hardest level. I've got this great strategy, which I must tell you about, sometime . . .**

**Anyway what really does sicken me, is to see so many good strategy games, such as *Waterloo*, *Gettysburg* and *Rebelstar* on the Spectrum, but not on the good old Commodore. Why? Is it that they can not transfer these games to a superior machine? I'd love to buy these games, but do I have to by a Spectrum to play them?**
**Tony (Genghis) Bailey, Liverpool 30**

*It might comfort you to know – it doesn't comfort me – that there's been a distinct dearth of any sort of strategy game, good or otherwise, on the Spectrum recently. My Frontline column in CRASH has been going through lean times. But there have been lots of excellent releases for the disk drive owner recently, and as far as I can make out there's more to come. I was told at the PCW show by SSI that they're planning to release the single-load B-24 Flight Simulator on cassette. The big problem for cassette owners is that there aren't any in America, and that's where most of the good strategy software is coming from at the moment!*



# TACTICS

This month I was delighted to receive an answer to my pleas for help to get into Siriadne's fortress in *Shard Of Spring*. **Damian McCourt** of Dublin has revealed details of the final stages of the game, and other *Shard Of Spring* fans who haven't got this far and don't want their enjoyment spoiled are advised to close their eyes for the next few paragraphs.

To open the fortress door, one of your wizards with spirit runes has to possess the spell 'Daza Reveli'. The first word of the spell is to be found in the dungeon hidden in the mountains on a straight line southwest of Treynor. The second word is muttered in your ear by a wizard in the pub on the 'distant island' you get to through the Castle of the Gatekeeper. The complete spell appears in the wizards' spell list, and should be used while camped in front of the fortress door.

Once your party is inside, it shouldn't expect to stay alive very long. The place is stiff with 13th level wizards and creatures possessed of more hit points than they know what to do with. There are a number of preset encounters, and the best way to deal with the challenge is to make several sorties to eliminate these gradually; escaping via a teleport spell when hit points and spell points get dangerously low.

Despite its dangers, Siriadne's castle has some desirable magic items hidden in its walls. Halfway up the tower, on a balcony, is a purple dove which acts as a teleportation device. There's a much-needed hit point replenishing pool nearby, and in the crypt there's a key to a forcefield near the top of the tower. Somewhat illogically, you can only enter the crypt to get the key after you've found the forcefield.

Take plenty of magic items into the fortress. Healing potions are particularly handy, but the most useful item in the game is the Elfin Gem. This marvel of magical technology replenishes wizards' spell points, and its impossible to get to the top of the tower without exhausting all their natural power.

When your party at last meets Siriadne face-to-face she turns out to have 118 hit points and two sidekicks. Damian forebears to give away too much about the final conflict, but he does reveal that the ending itself consists of several screens of the kind of purple beloved of adventure game writers.

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*Merry Christmas from all of us at* **Verran**

# ZZAP! 3D POSTMARK

with BRENDON KAVANAGH

**Ah well! Christmas is here again, and the shop windows are full of tinsel and the like. Yet Christmas is a problem time for many of us – it slows down the postal system, and if it snows, the post gets even more delayed. You might get cascades of Christmas cards, but the order forms don't necessarily come through on time. I'm sure there must be a more reliable method of Playing By Mail than Playing By Mail – Playing by Electronic Mail perhaps? Sounds the same – but is much quicker to play. It would be much more expensive, no doubt. I wonder whether all of us could stretch our budgets to afford modems? I suspect not. Maybe in the future? Until that day, my Christmas toast will be to the postmen and postwomen, with their bicycles and vans, who bravely battle all conditions to bring our post to us on time!**

## PBM CONVENTION III

A great event is being held on February 20th 1988 – one that surpasses the PCW Show and even our local car boot sale in one fell swoop. The event is none other than the great British Play By Mail Convention . . . and what a day it's going to be. Features will include new game launches, a bar, cafe and, the representatives of about forty PBM companies to chat with, a live RPG battle display (and they *do not* play by Marquis of Queensferry rules) and numerous competitions. Doors open at 10:30 in the morning and entrance to this wild extravaganza costs a mere £2. The venue is the PORCHESTER CENTRE, QUEENSWAY, LONDON (the same place as last year for anyone who was there), and the nearest tube station is ROYAL OAK.

The convention is a very good place to start up in a game. You have all day to stroll about looking at what's available on the market, and if you like something, you can usually start up on the day at a price below that of the usual market rate. It's a great day out – I would definitely recommend it.

## PBM MAGS

Several people have asked me the same question recently: Are there any specialist Play By Mail magazines? The answer is yes. In fact there are three worth noting, each of which I shall deal with in turn.

The biggest, best and most expensive is *Flagship*. It's an international production and covers Play By Mailing as a world wide topic. Some accuse it of favouring the American market too often – that's as maybe, but there's certainly a large US following of these games! *Flagship* is a well written production, flawed mainly by its unreliable print dates. In every issue there are good features and reviews, games tips and news. It also has a guide to all of the Play By Mail companies known to the editors, a guide to every game on the market, and a correspondence column. From England, the cost is £1.75 per issue (although subscriptions are available). Write to *FLAGSHIP*, PO BOX 12, ALDRIDGE, WALSALL, WEST MIDLANDS, WS9 0TJ.

Another well established magazine is called simply *PBM*. It's a basic but reliable production for the British market and is run by a husband and wife organisation called *EMJAY*. To be honest, *PBM* is very modest compared with *Flagship*, but each issue (which comes out every two or three months) contains adverts, letters, a thoughtful editorial, a news section, reviews, constructive articles on game design, and long running reports on games which are actually being played. Well worth supporting for the price. Send £1.65 to *EMJAY*, 17 LANGBANK AVENUE, RISE PARK, NOTTINGHAM, NG5 5BU, but don't expect anything glossy.

The final magazine worth a mention is called *First Post*. It's a relatively new production (three issues old) but all the same, it's a very good read. *First Post* is crudely produced some might say, but visual appearance is not all that counts. It contains reviews (or updates on games), feature articles, puzzles and some details of low budget games. *First Post* costs a pound from *KG PACK*, WALNUT TREE LODGE, 9 KINGS MEADOW LANE, HIGHAM FERRARS, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NN9 8JE and offers good value.

The good thing about these hobby magazines that they're often glad to print some of your own work. They don't pay well (if at all), but it's nice to see your own articles in print, and it helps the editor produce a nicely balanced magazine.



## PLANTAGENET

**PRODUCER:** Destrier Games, PO Box 74, Rotherham, South Yorks, S60 1RS
**START–UP FEE:** £5 (inc first three turns)
**COST PER TURN:** £1.50 per turn (open ended)

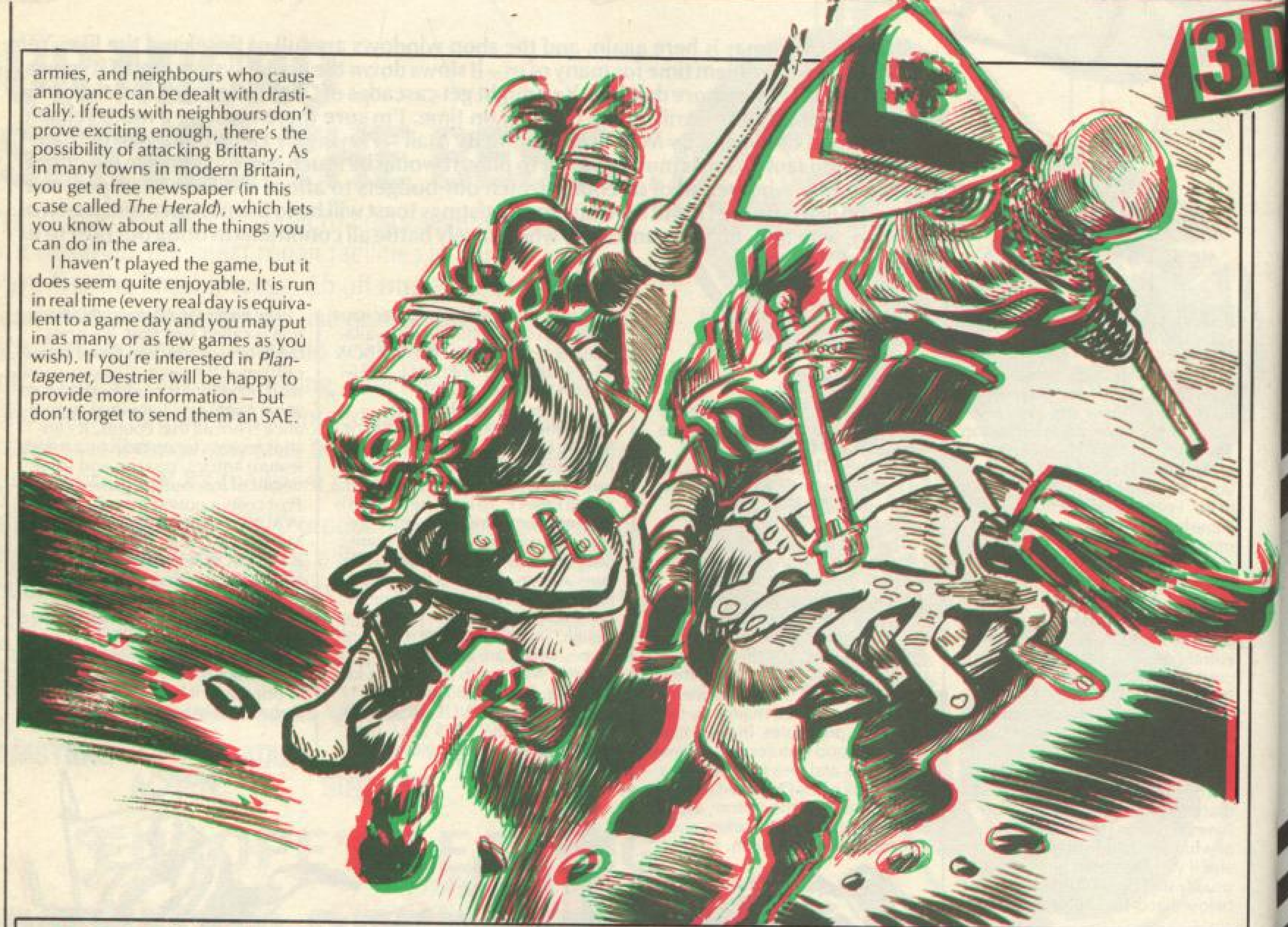
*Plantagenet* is a simulation of the life of the nobility in fourteenth century Britain. It has been around for over a year now, although I must confess that this is the first I've heard of it. The game's objective is simple, but actual gameplay could well prove to be quite involved.

Game history is parallel with that of our own until the end of 1344. With effect from January 1st, 1345, history is there to be made by the players. Those participating take on the role of any British nobleman they fancy (either Welsh, Scottish or English) and go on from there. Each player has a castle and an estate to run, and has to make sure income and expenses balance. A player's character may do almost as he like, and can enter the church, government, or the king's army. Players are also entitled to raise their own ▶




armies, and neighbours who cause annoyance can be dealt with drastically. If feuds with neighbours don't prove exciting enough, there's the possibility of attacking Brittany. As in many towns in modern Britain, you get a free newspaper (in this case called *The Herald*), which lets you know about all the things you can do in the area.

I haven't played the game, but it does seem quite enjoyable. It is run in real time (every real day is equivalent to a game day and you may put in as many or as few games as you wish). If you're interested in *Plantagenet*, Destrier will be happy to provide more information – but don't forget to send them an SAE.



# POSTMARKED

**Well, well, well – my postbag runneth over! Would you believe a 100% improvement on last month's mail? Keep 'em coming!**

Dear Brendon
About two years ago I began playing *Star Master* by Mitre Games and found it to be excellent. It incorporated all the needs of diplomacy, military and economic strategy, politics and pure bluff to create a great wargame. Sadly, I had to give up this hobby because of work. I would now like to join a PBM game again. I've heard of a game called *Global Supremacy* – perhaps you could tell me something about it. What is it about, how much does it cost and who is the GM? What I'm looking for is a realistic and more or less contemporary wargame with tanks and ships rather than clubs and magic spells.
I hope you can help.

**James B Swan, Harlesden, London**

*Yes James,* Global Supremacy *could well suit you. Set on a parallel Earth, each player commands a country (more or less) of their own choice. Those players simply run their countries and fight their battles as if in real life: economic problems occur, technological developments lead to advances in weapons technology, and (best of all, to my mind) the game is played using a proper atlas of the world. All terrain, landmarks and other features exist in the game as in the real world, and* Global Supremacy is run in virtual realtime. The only problem is the cost. It could become rather hefty as the game develops. From reading the immense rulebook, you soon get to see that this game could cost over £20.00 per month to play well. If you manage to build an empire, it could turn out to be very time consuming.

However, cost and time factors apart, *Global Supremacy* seems well suited to someone with your own tastes. The game features about 29 varieties of seafaring vessels and a great number of different tanks, APC and artillery units. There are also missiles, infantry, aircraft, helicopters, and even satellites if you can develop your technology that far!

For more information you should write to your friends MITRE GAMES (189 BALHAM HIGH ROAD, LONDON, SW12). Incidentally, there are several good SciFi and even historical wargames worth looking at . . .

**BK**

Dear Brendon
I believe that PBM games are too expensive. School kids like myself can't afford to play! I'm sure that they would be good fun to play, but I just don't have the money . . .
Anyway, good luck with *Postmark*, although I'm sure you don't need it.

**Michael Murray, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear**

*Now then, Mike, you have a good point there. The problem with quality Play by Mail games is that offices have to rented and the staff paid. Still, there are many that can cost you less than £1.50 per fortnight to play – if that's any help. One for you to try is Super Vorcon Wars,* which I talked about a couple of issues ago.

Thank you for the letter and the good will – a merry Christmas to you too.

**BK**

**So that's it for this issue. If you have any views to air, questions to ask, points to make, or arguments to argue, or anything concerning Play By Mail, write to me at: POSTMARKED, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

**See you next month – have a happy Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.**

**BRENDON KAVANAGH**

# Introducing ActionSoft!

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Colonel Jack Rosenow, President of ActionSoft, is out to turn the simulation software industry upside down:

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Up Periscope! is available on disk for the Commodore 64/128 computers (suggested retail price £19.95) and for IBM PC-compatible computers (£24.95). For direct orders please include 55p for shipping. Visa, Access, and Personal cheques accepted.

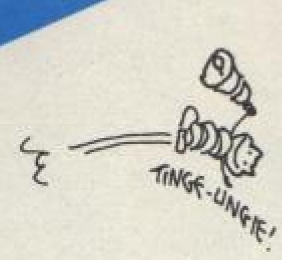





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# THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

**A year in the software industry is a long, long time, and the past twelve months have certainly been embroiled in a tumult of confusion. ZZAP! dons its rose-tinted spectacles and takes a retrospective view of past events and events passed.**

## JANUARY

It was the ZZAP! Christmas Special that heralded the new year of 1987. On its front was ZZAP! Male Voice Choir, resplendent in their red cassocks, and on the back was a free copy of the now-defunct **LM**.

Between these were pages and pages of features, interviews, competitions, a calendar and even a free poster . . . but surprisingly few reviews. Unfortunately, by the time our deadlines drew to a close at the end of November, only 19 games had arrived in the office. The situation was made even worse when, apart from role playing game *Bard's Tale*, none scored over 90%. It was strange to think that the Christmas Special, which was supposed to be filled with all the 'big' Christmas releases, had only one Sizzler and the smallest number of reviews in the magazine's history . . .

Still, **US Gold**'s *Super Huey II* and **MAD**'s *Flash Gordon* were both hammering on the doors of Sizzlerdom, each scoring 89%, and the much-awaited sequel to the weird and wonderful *Psi Warrior*, *Warrior II* scored only a percent less. Another game which offered originality as well as playability was **Micropool**'s *Nuclear Embargo*.

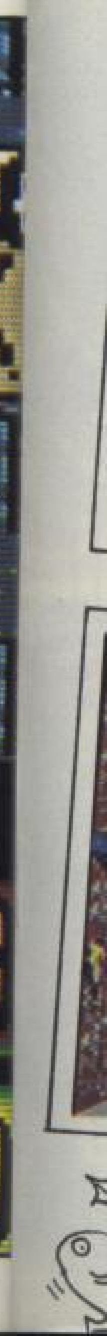
Arcade conversions included **Elite**'s *1942*, *Crystal Castles* (**US Gold**), *Donkey Kong* (**Ocean**), and *Galvan* from **Imagine**. *Donkey Kong* was the pick of the bunch, offering the player a chance to wallow deep in arcade nostalgia, but the rest were very mediocre efforts which failed to capture the spirits of the original machines.

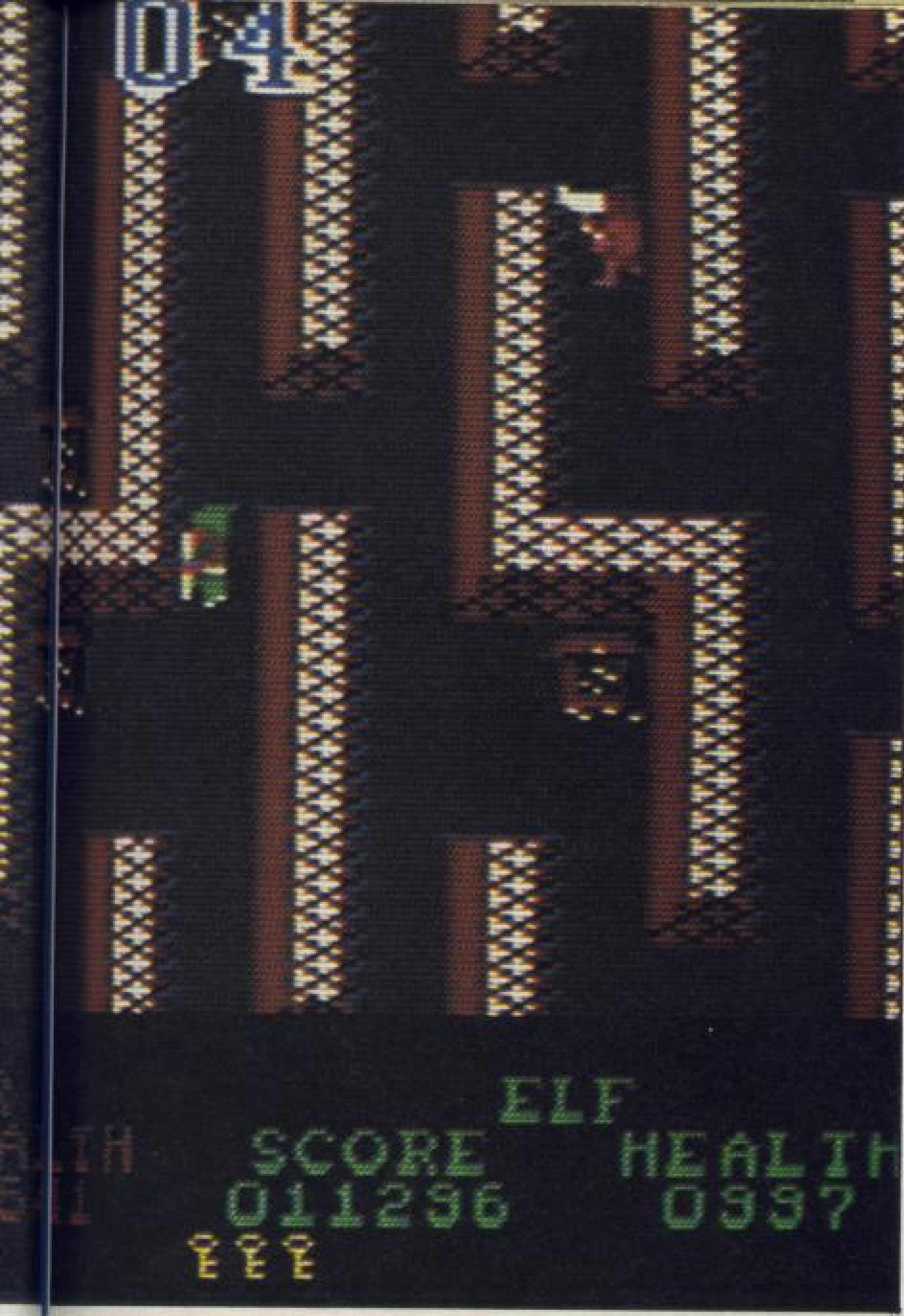
So, Christmas was a great disappointment, and we began to wonder whether the industry was falling apart at the seams. Our pessimistic views were soon to be proved unfounded . . .

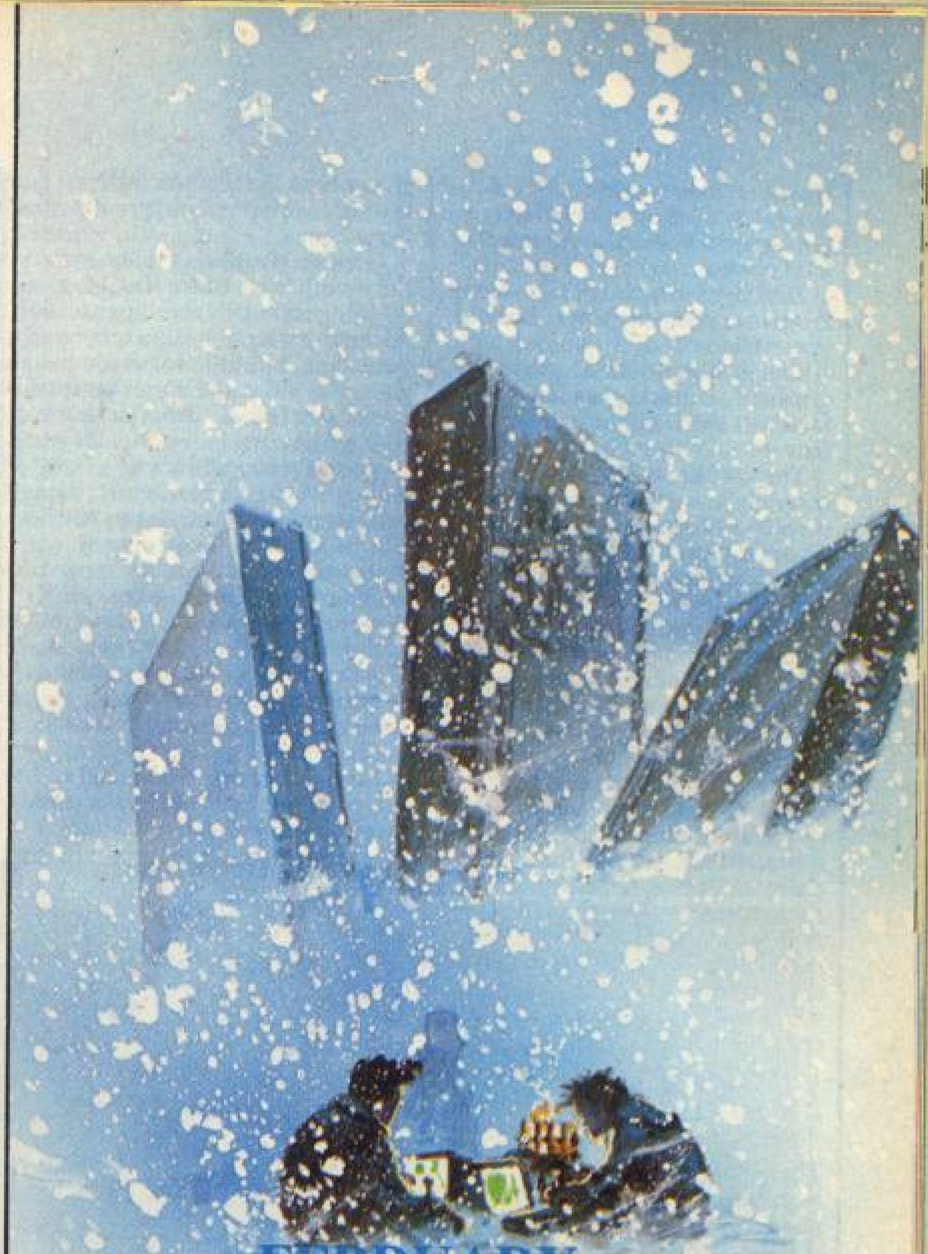




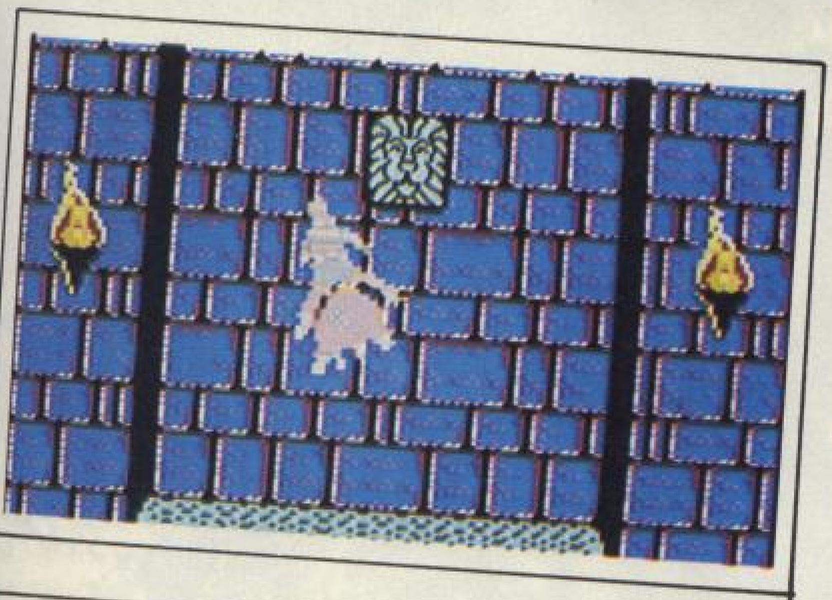






# FEBRUARY





In the four weeks following the festive season, ZZAP! was 'Snowed Under By Software', with a deluge of 44 post-Christmas releases! Licenses and clones were to the fore, with (cue: very deep breath) 1943, Xevious, Breakthru, Cobra, Bombjack II, Tarzan, Dragon's Lair II, Gauntlet, Highlander, Howard the Duck, It's a Knockout, Judge Dredd, Legend of Kage, Paperboy, Scooby Doo, Space Harrier and Terra Cresta.

**US Gold**'s *Gauntlet* was awarded a very controversial Sizzler rating at 93%. It turned out that the conversion had several 'features' (or bugs as they're otherwise known), including potions disappearing, players swapping characteristics and the infamous walking off the screen trick. Readers wrote in with their complaints, but generally, *Gauntlet* was regarded to be a very playable and entertaining game.

The rest of the arcade conversions were generally very poor, the most notable failures being **US Gold**'s Xevious (21%) and *Breakthru* (19%), and *Space Harrier* and *Paperboy* from **Elite** (earning themselves 44% and 45% respectively)

The officially licensed games of films and characters were also a poor lot, and suffered from a severe lack of imagination. *Highlander* (30%), **Imagine**'s game of the film was a very disappointing sword fighting game which could be beaten with one repeated move, and *Tarzan* ended up becoming a very poor arcade adventure.

Gary Penn described **Ocean**'s *Cobra* as 'unoriginal, shoddy, unprofessional and grossly overpriced', and the 13% overall rating reflected a very, very poor film tie-in. *Howard the Duck* (19%) was another disappointing transition from celluloid to computer and also came in for some heavy flack. Julian summed it up as '. . . a complete waste of time'. The other waste of a licence was the official *Judge Dredd* game from **Melbourne House**. It turned out to be a feeble platform effort that suffered from lousy graphics and an inept game design. The 13% mark was very accurate . . .

Original games were a healthier lot, with *Lightforce*, a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up from **FTL**, proving itself a worthy blast at 87%, and *Heartland*, **Odin**'s excellent arcade adventure cashing in at 86%.

*Escape from Singe's Castle* vastly improved on its prequel, **Dragon's Lair II**, and its eight challenging levels, colourful graphics and brilliant soundtrack all added towards its well deserved Sizzler rating of 90%.

In a different class, but offering just as much playability and addiction was *Tenth Frame* (85%), a bowling simulation from **Access**, creators of *Leaderboard*.

A much-touted release which didn't live up to expectations was *Starglider* from **Rainbird** (68%). On the ST and Amiga this vector shoot 'em up is great, but unfortunately the limitations of the Commodore proved too much. The end product looked bland and didn't play particularly well . . .

**Gremlin Graphics**' *Gauntlet* clone, *Avenger*, just missed a Sizzler rating and earned itself a commendable 86%. Another ▶

*Gauntlet* clone was **Mastertronic**'s *Storm* (38%), but unfortunately poor graphics, sound and gameplay let it down.

*Destroyer* steamed in from from American company **Epyx**, and did very well for itself with 85%. Although it's a little tricky to get to grips with, it quickly became a firm favourite with 'action simulation' fans.

The old White Wizard was certainly in a good mood this month, and awarded two Sizzlers. The first went to **Infocom**'s *Moonmist*, an adventure-cum-mystery, and the second was claimed by the *Silicon Dreams Trilogy* – a compilation of three Level 9 adventures: *Snowball, Return to Eden* and *Worm in Paradise*, re-packaged and re-released by **Rainbird**.

Another hot Sizzler was **Firebird**'s first Activision budget re-release, the incredible *Park Patrol* (94%). **Ariolasoft** also had a claim to Sizzling fame with their robbery game, *They Stole A Million* (90%). Incidentally, the cassette version didn't appear for some months after due to a bug which made the game impossible to complete . . .

## MARCH

The software boom didn't decrease as expected during March, and games continued to pour in.

Gary Penn started the issue with a particularly long editorial, which attacked the industry's lack of new ideas. Indeed, with the previous month's very poor offerings as evidence, there was very much a case to argue.

In the wintry month of March there was only one 'officially licensed game': *Labyrinth*. The rest were all 'original', but unfortunately the quality wasn't at its best, and there was only one Sizzler.

Pick of the month was *Mutants*, a highly original psychedelic shoot 'em up from **Imagine**. With ten levels of weird and wonderful action, it proved a real winner. Julian branded it 'an essential purchase' and warned, 'if you miss it, you're missing something special'.

Causing a stir at ZZAP! towers was **Piranha**'s *Nosferatu*, a fast forced perspective arcade adventure based on the film of the same name. It was certainly an enjoyable little game, and the 88% overall mark was thoroughly deserved.

Strange game of the month award went to *Chameleon* (84%), a weird horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up from **Electric Dreams**. Although the instructions were highly confusing (Electric Dreams actually left out half of them, programmer Martin Walker admitted at a later date) ZZAP!'s reviewers battled on and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

*Tracker* sounded promising when it was first announced by **Rainbird**, but didn't live up to expectations when it finally arrived. Although the packaging was very impressive, the game itself was very dull indeed, and only scraped 41%. 'I'm not impressed with Rainbird's policy of dressing games up in big, fancy boxes with glossy booklets just to create a favourable impression' grumbled Gary Penn.

**Gremlin Graphics**'s release of the month was **Future Knight**, a multi-directionally scrolling arcade adventure which boasts a very large landscape, but little variety in the gameplay. 'Overall it's a very *nice* game' said Julian, 'But it lacks any real action'.

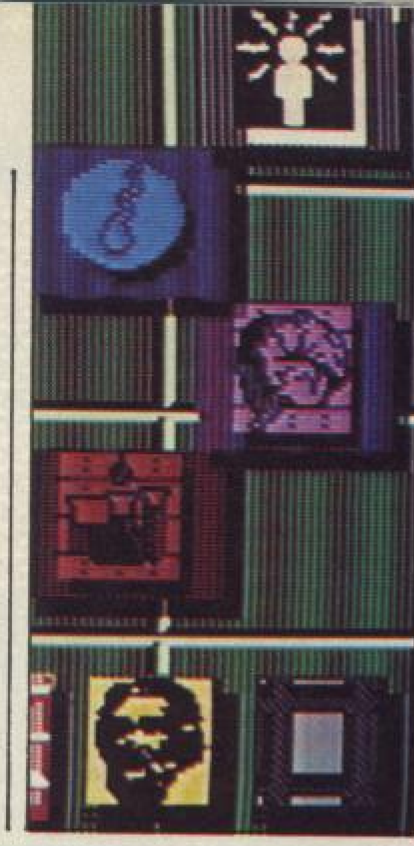
The only film tie-in was *Labyrinth*, which had been programmed in America by the Lucasfilm team, the people responsible for classics as *Ballblazer* and *The Eidolon*. Unfortunately their first foray into the officially licensed market wasn't a memorable one, and the resulting multiload arcade adventure was awarded a strictly average 50%.

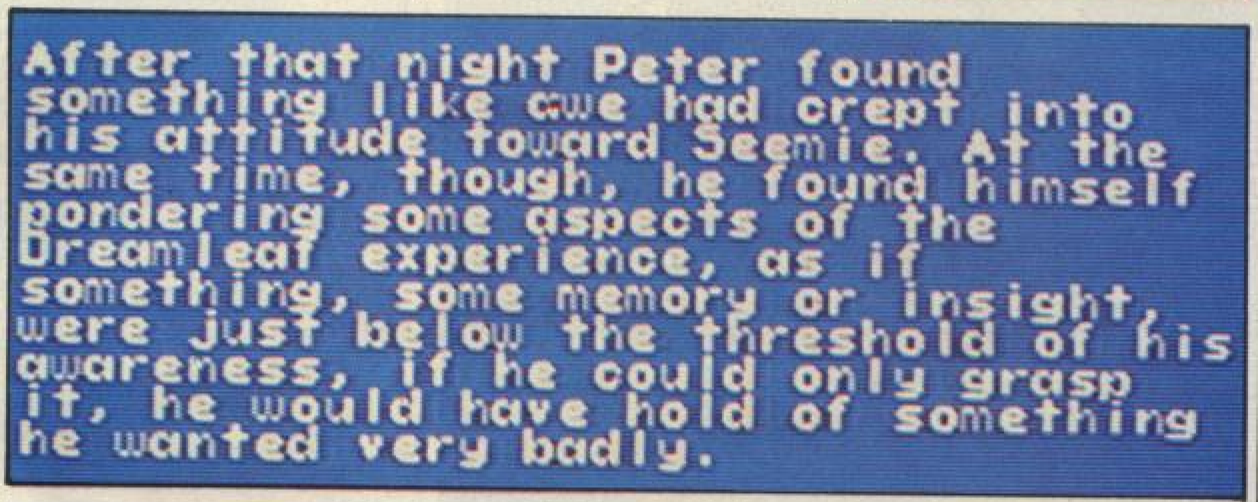
**Electric Dreams** released a *Gauntlet* clone called *Dandy*, and went down like a lead balloon. 'It quite simply offers awful value for money' said Paul, reflecting the very poor overall rating of 28%.

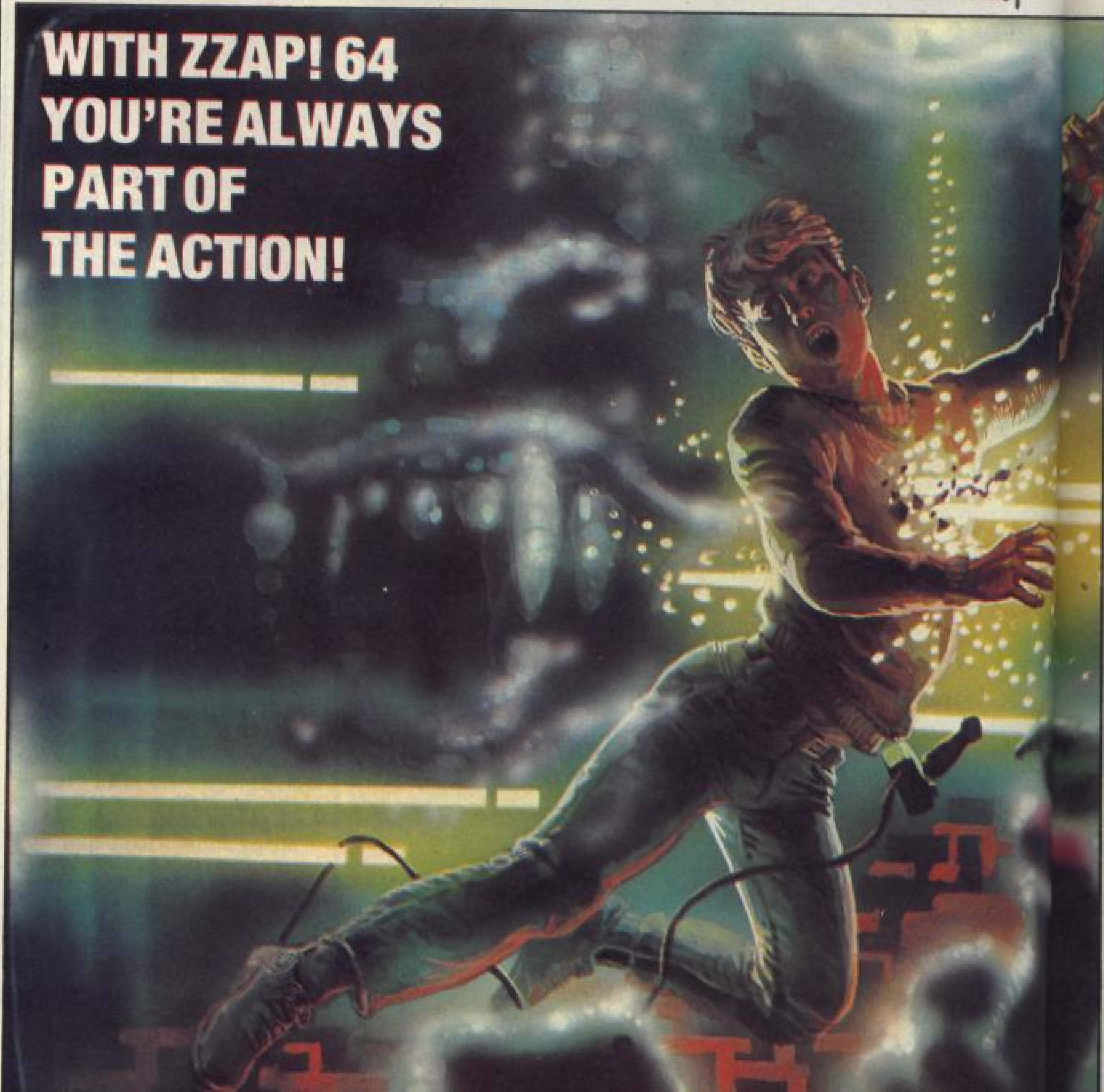
A very strange release came from **Activision**. Their three disk *Portal*, was more of an interactive science fiction book, and required the player to explore the database of a future computer. There were very mixed feelings about the product, with Julian loving it, and Gary having second thoughts.

March also saw the first installment of chuckling coder Andrew Braybrook's new diary, in which *Morpheus* was merely a twinkle in his eye. Over the following months, the rakish rogue was to chronicle the development of his new game, which wouldn't appear until . . . well, more of that later.

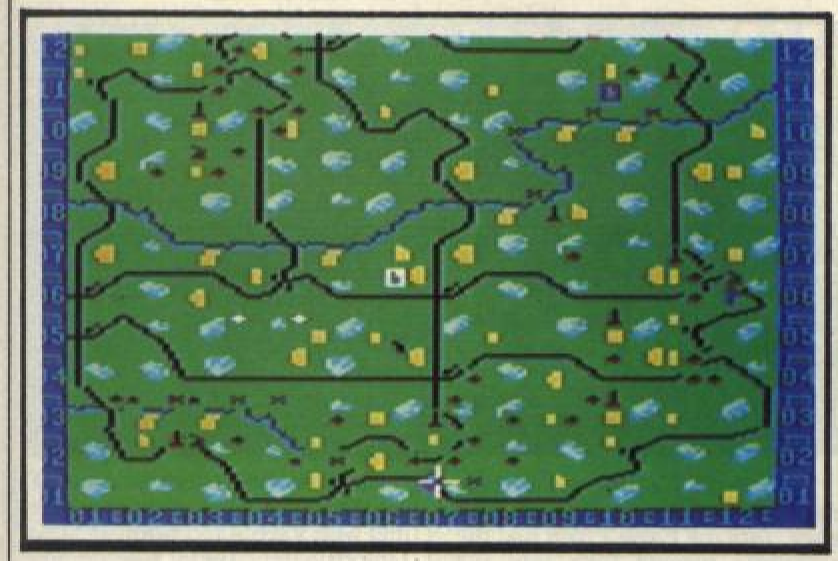
And so ended March 1987. There's never going to be another one . . .











## APRIL

There were two hotshot arrivals in April: *Gunship* from American simulation specialists **Microprose**, and Steve Jarratt, the chummy XR2-driving Brummie who filled a vacant position as staff writer.

There was a fair amount of controversy over *Gunship*. Gary Penn, who has never confessed to enjoying flight simulations, started his comment, 'Yet another program under the dubious heading of a flight simulation' and continued in a negative vein. The other two reviewers thoroughly enjoyed the program, with Julian commenting at length on the simulation's depth, concluding, '*Gunship* is immensely enjoyable, being exciting and rewarding to fly'.

The disk version sizzled at 94%, but the cassette version, which was marred by a painful multiload system that took twenty five minutes to set up a flight, was reviewed separately and only merited a mark of 72%.

The latest **Activision** game to be given a new lease of life on **Firebird**'s Silver Range, was *Zone Ranger* (80%), a classic blaster similar in ways to **Williams**' *Sinistar*. 'Put it high on your *must buy* list' said an enthusiastic Rignall.

Another budget blaster arrived in the form of *Void Runner*, a fast and frenetic conversion from Jeff Minter's equally lively C16 game marketed by budget kings, **Mastertronic**. It's fast, colourful and extremely playable, and deserved every percent of the 85 it was awarded.

By April, vertically scrolling games had, as Julian put it, 'become as common as muck, and in most cases not better', but a surprise was in store for the cynical youths when *Firetrack* arrived from the Southampton offices of **Electric Dreams**. It's a vertically scrolling game that oozes playability and has some very individual graphics which aren't at all characteristic of a Commodore 64. The attack waves didn't behave predictably either, and Mr Penn found it all 'very unnerving' but still 'a must for anyone who finds shoot 'em ups a turn on'. It just missed a Sizzler rating at 88%, and is still considered to be one of the best vertical scrollers around.

Scrolling the other way was *Delta*, the long awaited sequel to Stavros Fasoulas' *Sanxion*. There



was conflicting opinions in the office with Julian saying 'the graphics are superlative, the effects are stunning and the sound is nothing short of amazing'. Gary had reservations and confessed that he 'enjoyed the mixing-deck loader more than the game itself'. After much discussion and argument *Delta* was awarded 74% . . .

A disappointing arcade conversion from **US Gold** was *Express Raider* (60%), providing some limited enjoyment which swiftly disappeared once the mission had been completed. Worse still was **Konami**'s first attempt at a conversion of their own arcade game. *Jail Break* was an unmitigated disaster, and came complete with inept graphics, ropy collision detection and poor gameplay. The 30% overall mark was very fitting!

On the other hand, **Imagine** proved that decent arcade conversions could be produced painlessly, and released *Arkanoid* (80%) to an appreciative audience. Faithful graphics, an excellent original soundtrack and plenty of options made this very enjoyable and addictive – especially when played with a mouse, which Gary described as, 'simply gorgeous'.

**Gremlin Graphics** also produced a breakout game called *Krakout*, and even though it boasted 100 different screens, it was considered a chore rather than a challenge, and just didn't 'feel' as good. Consequently it was awarded a meagre 55%.

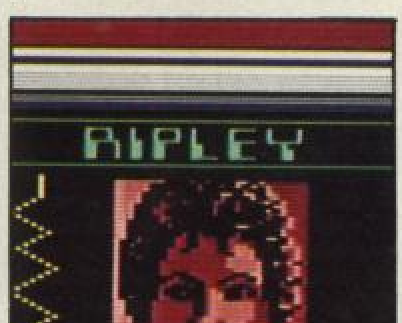
A new version of *Leaderboard* appeared in the guise of *Leaderboard: Executive Edition*, but the reviewers didn't feel it was that much of an improvement on the original. Although there were trees, new courses and bunkers, the gameplay was very similar and consequently it only scored 72%.

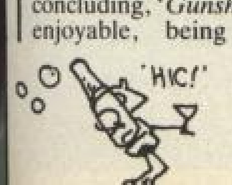
As a break from the normal routine, some ZZAP! staffers spent a day at the seaside and reported on what was new in the arcades, with the best of the bunch including the infamous *Out Run*, *WEC Le Mans 24*, *720°* and *Bubble Bobble*.

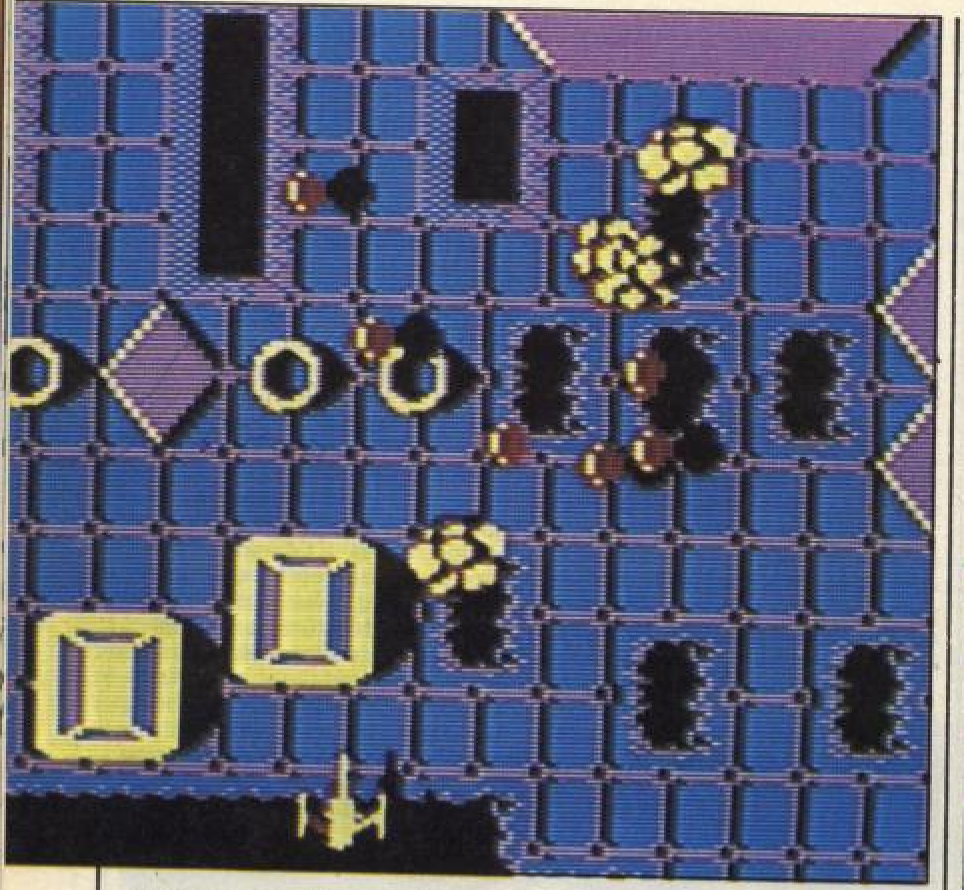
While the spiky ones gallivanted around the arcades, the White Wizard tackled *Masters of the Universe: The Adventure* and found it lacked descriptions and a good parser. He also bemoaned the fact that the 'Trade Mark Mattel' or 'Trade Mark Filmation' that appeared after every character's name ruined what little atmosphere the adventure generated. 'I suppose it's just possible that I've got it wrong and the game is really what everyone out there is waiting for. If this is the case, write and tell me, and I'll give up adventuring right now and retire to Disneyland (Trade Mark Walt Disney).' Luckily no one did!

Another toy tie-in which wasn't too inspiring was the American version of *Transformers*, brought over the 'pond' by **Activision**. It played like a brick and offered very little entertainment – hence the 40% overall mark. Most surprising of all was that it had been designed by David Crane, author of *Little Computer People* and *Decathlon*.

A licensed product that DID do well was *Aliens*. Both Julian and Steve are staunch Aliens fanatics and couldn't believe it when they discovered that **Electric Dreams**' official licence successfully captured the atmosphere of the film – and was playable too! '*Aliens* is the best film tie-in to date, and a good game to boot' exclaimed an ecstatic Rignall. The 81% was certainly the highest overall percentage ever given to a film licence!





Bummer of the month was *Explorer*, a hopeless 'concept' from **Electric Dreams** in which the player searched a planet for nine parts of a spaceship. The game boasted 40 billion mappable locations, but unfortunately they all looked the same. 'This is a computer simulation of searching for a needle in a haystack' moaned Paul Sumner, while Julian recommended 'if you really want to do some exploring, why not buy a rail or bus ticket?' It scraped 13%, and swiftly disappeared into obscurity.

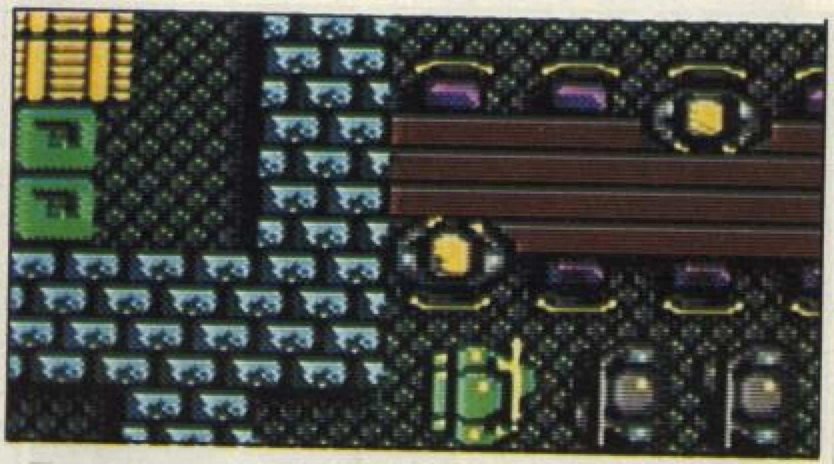
One of the main events of the month was the April Fool, kindly supplied by Andrew Braybrook. He claimed that if his *6510 Accelerator Listing* was entered before loading any tape game, it would speed the program up by a factor of two. Many readers typed in the lengthy listing and loaded in hope . . . only to be greeted with an *April Fool* message thirty seconds later. Ho! Ho! At least we thought it was funny.



# MAY

Hmm! What happened in not-so-sunny May? Well, Steve Turner's *Gauntlet* variant, *Ranarama*, arrived at the offices and caused a great deal of argument. 'It's the best thing I've played this month' said the highly excitable Rignall, 'Brilliant stuff'. Unfortunately he was alone in his opinion and Steve argued 'it's too derivative to be worthwhile'. After much discussion and argument, a mark of 87% was awarded by the Editor, much to the disgust of both parties. Politics, politics!

The pick of the bunch came from **Konami**. After their disastrous first attempt with *Jail Break*, we awaited their conversion of *Nemesis* (80%) with some trepidation. Fortunately congratulations were in order, and Konami managed to include many of the original machine's features while retaining plenty of playability. 'A good arcade blast' said Julian Rignall after admitting that the arcade version had destroyed a large proportion of his wage packet the previous Summer.



The second *Gauntlet* clone of the month came from newcomers **Pandora**. *Into the Eagle's Nest* had the reviewers playing long into the night as they battled through a World War II castle to rescue prisoners. 'Highly entertaining and worth every penny' claimed Steve. Unanimous in their enthusiasm, the team slapped a Sizzler rating of 90% on it!

Originality still lived however, with two really innovative games, the first of which was **Activision**'s eponymous *Sailing*. Taking control of a racing yacht, the player races against an opponent over a set course. Excellent graphics and lovely 'feel' help add the extra touch of class to an extremely polished program. 'What a pleasant surprise' exclaimed Gary 'I wouldn't have thought a sailing simulation could be so absorbing'. Nor could the rest of the team.

*Shockway Rider* was the other game scoring high on originality. **Faster Than Light**'s wonderful horizontally scrolling knock 'em down caused Julian to wax lyrical, 'Don't Walk – Boogie. Mug the muggers and soft-shoe shuffle the walkways of the future'! Steve wasn't so convinced of its lasting appeal and a compromise was reached with a rating of 86% – just missing that all-important 90% mark.

There were three arcade conversions during the merry, merry month of May, ranging from very poor, through average to extremely good. **Quicksilva**'s *Elevator Action* came into the 'poor' bracket thanks to some pathetic graphics and appalling bugs. The conversion completely failed to capture the atmosphere of the arcade machine and managed a generous 29%. *Shao-Lin's Road*, the first arcade conversion from **The Edge** was awarded 47%. Although it was a reasonable conversion, the actual arcade machine itself was very poor.

**Mosaic**'s computer version of *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* met with a tepid reception at 52%. Unfortunately there was far too much text and not enough interaction, and consequently it didn't take long to become dull.

*Grange Hill* was the unlikely sounding officially licensed computer game from **Argus Press**, and it didn't impress. Spelling and grammatical mistakes in the text, feeble graphics and very poor gameplay all contributed to the 19% overall mark. Julian called it 'the shoddiest, most lacklustre, pointless, unrewarding and unprofessional pieces of full-priced software ever seen'. Oh Dear.

*Werner*, **Ariolasoft**'s game of the German cartoon character received the lowest rating of the month, just limping into double figures with 10%. There were four different games in the package, but were all absolutely abysmal. The badly written instructions didn't help matters, either. 'Any gameplay is sadly missing' said Steve J.

The American officially licensed *Aliens* game came in from **Activision**, and wasn't a patch on the English version, only scoring 66%. Unfortunately the Americans had placed more emphasis on presentation, with the gameplay taking a back seat. Each of the six subgames were very poor indeed, and the entire game only gave a few hours entertainment. '*Aliens* remains a rehash of previously used **Activision** concepts, strung together and neatly packaged to fit the bill' came the scathing comment from Steve.

**Mastertronic** sneaked in another value for money special with *POD*, a one or two player blaster very much in the Minter/*Gridrunner* mould. 'It's packed with action and compulsively playable' enthused Gary Penn.

The second Sizzler appeared in the adventure section. The wizened one was so impressed with **Infocom**'s unusual *Hollywood*

*Hijinx* he awarded it 90%.

An attack of nostalgia swept through the office as ZZAP! offered the **Epyx** classic, *Impossible Mission* as a special offer, and pastblasted the game they all knew and loved. 'One day, all games will be made this way', said Steve hopefully. Thus ended act five of the year they called 1987 . . .

# JUNE

ZZAP! Issue 26 came complete with a sampler cassette on the cover, which included demos of *The Last Ninja* and *Revenge of the Mutant Camels II*, and an *audio* soundtrack from Rob Hubbard. Obviously we didn't explain ourselves properly, because many readers tried to load the audio 'B' side into their computers! You were supposed to put it into a normal tape deck and LISTEN to it!!

There were two Sizzlers this month – both began with Z, and both came from **Firebird**. The first was *Zolyx*, an incredibly simple, but amazingly addictive variant on the *Qix* theme. Work ground to a halt as the team played and played. 'Why is it' wondered Julian, 'that a game that looks like a complete and utter pile of rubbish can be so hellishly addictive'.

The other Sizzling Z at 91% was *Zenji*, a puzzle game that had been a firm favourite with the ZZAP! team ever since it first appeared on the **Activision** label in 1983! Its re-release was met with much rejoicing, and the three reviewers ejaculated a stream of superlatives. '*Zenji* is immensely playable, grossly addictive and temptingly cheap' said an enthusiastic Gary Penn. 'Think of it – in Billions of years of history there has never been anything better' said an even more enthusiastic Julian.

There were plenty of other **Activision** re-releases from **Firebird**, including *HERO*, an excellent scrolling exploring game which received a commendable 86%. That infamous joystick breaker, *Decathlon* also got a new lease of life, and at 76% was described by Steve Jarratt as 'tremendously playable'.

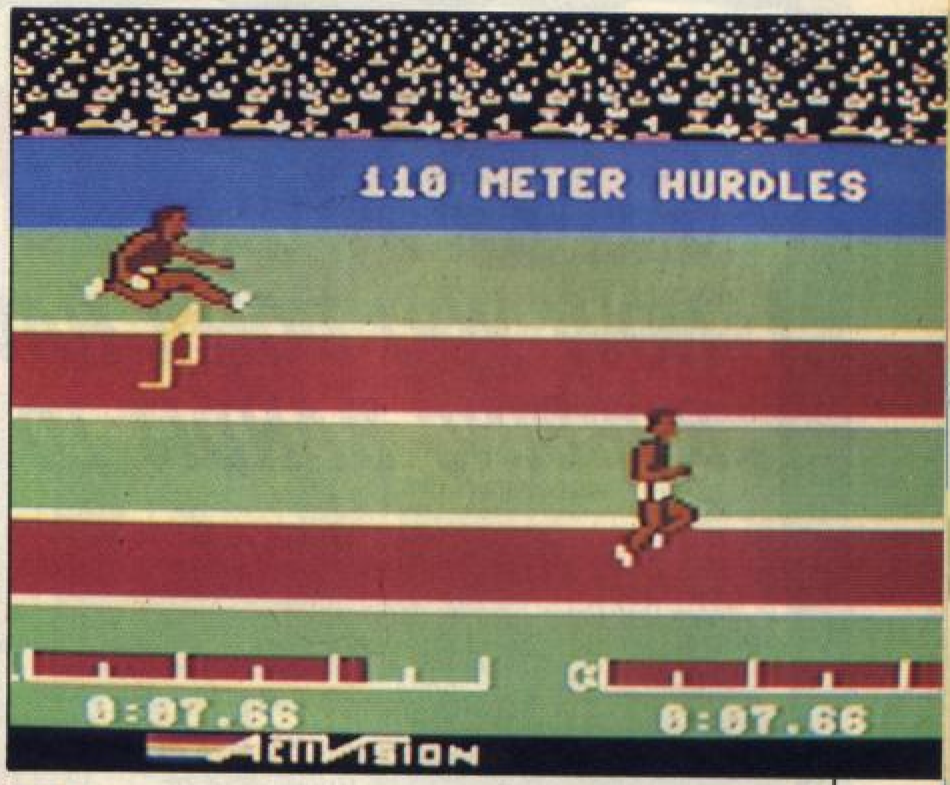
'It must be the oldest scroller on the market' said Julian Rignall of *River Raid* (70%), 'but it still knocks the pants off new stuff'. *Pitfall II* was the final re-release, and scored 60% – 'not a bad buy for two quid' admitted Jarratt.

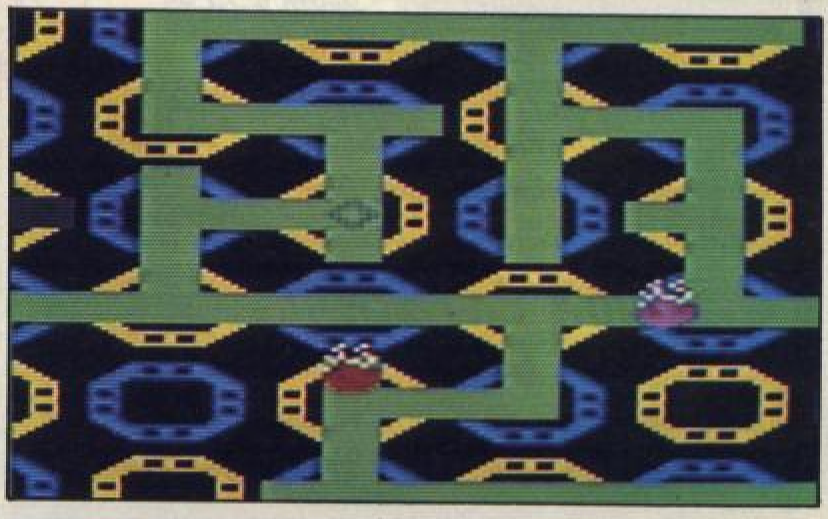
Another budget bargain arrived in the guise of *Gods and Heroes* (84%), an excellent platform game from **The Power House** that Steve felt he could sum up in one word: 'incrediblyfrustratingbutplayable'.

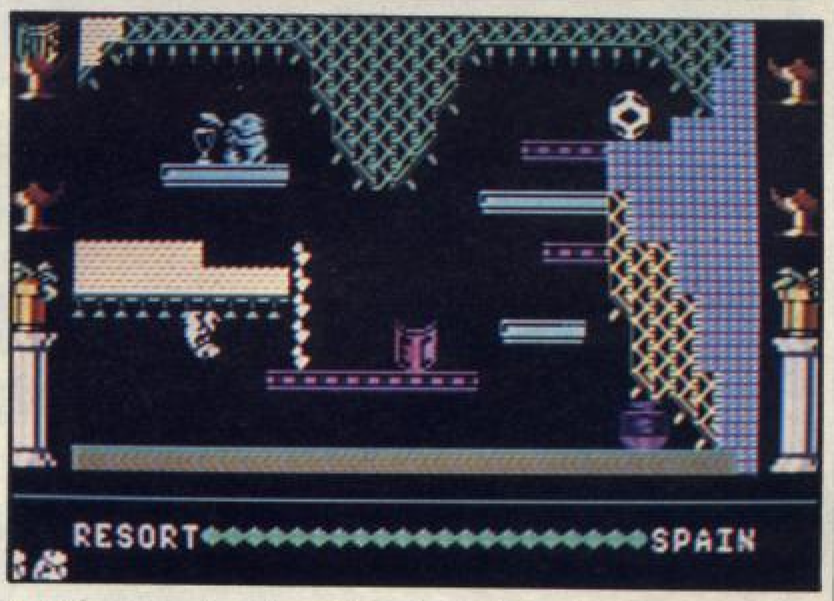
A trio of tie-ins arrived in the not-so-hot month of June, the first of which was **Electric Dreams**' belated *Big Trouble in Little China*. The film had bombed the Christmas before, and the game, a pathetic *Kung-Fu Master* clone, was destined to follow suit. 'Electric Dreams ought to have a wet blanket thrown over them' commented Julian.

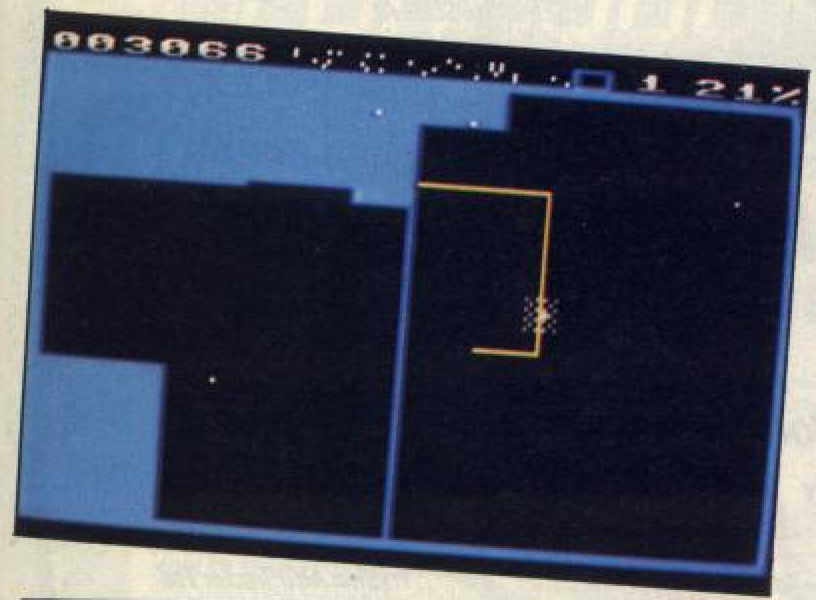
**US Gold**'s big licence of the month was based on the *Masters of the Universe* cartoon and toys. However, the programmer's imagination must have been lacking when it came to designing the game, for the end result was hotchpotch of platform game and arcade adventure, and merited a poor 44%. 'Holy Trademarks' exclaimed Rignall 'Once Master of the Universe, *He Man* is reduced to playing a sprite in a substandard platform game'.

*Nemesis The Warlock*, **Martech**'s violent game of the *2000 AD* comic strip wasn't at all representative of the character, but provided limited enjoyment nevertheless. 'Watching the corpses pile up is gratification beyond belief' cried a gleeful Paul Sumner.









Disappointment was in order with *Star Raiders II* (58%), the sequel to Atari's classic *Star Raiders*. **Electric Dreams** converted it to the Commodore, but didn't make a good job. 'It's a shame the graphics and sound don't support the interesting and involved gameplay' mused Julian.

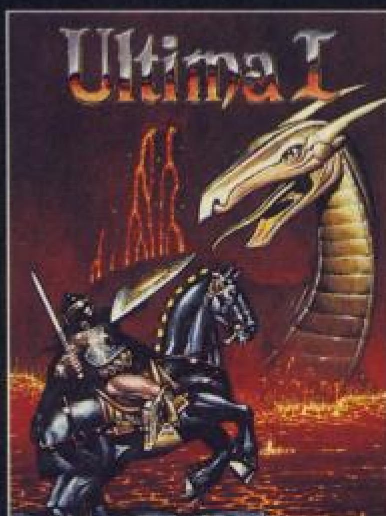
Another disappointing sequel, or more a sequel to a sequel was **Gremlin Graphics** *Auf Wiederse - hen Monty* . The third moling attempt met with a very cool reception when it was discovered that it looked and played virtually the same as its predecessors. 'An archaic and exhausted formula with a modern price tag' grumbled Gary Penn, '*Auf Wiedersehen Monty* . . . and good riddance'. Needless to say there was some controversy over the 46% overall mark – it seemed that you either loved it or hated it.

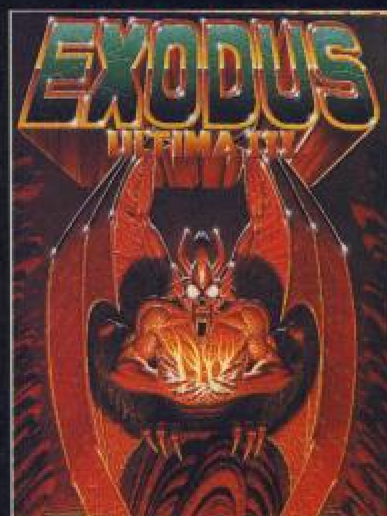
The Australian company, **Melbourne House** surfaced after a long, long time, and attempted to restore their reputation as a leading software house with *Doc the Destroyer*. They failed, and *Doc* was awarded a miserable 32%. 'There are two parts to *Doc*' explained Steve, 'a weak beat 'em up section and an even weaker adventure section'. Julian was more succinct, 'What a bore . . . ' said he.

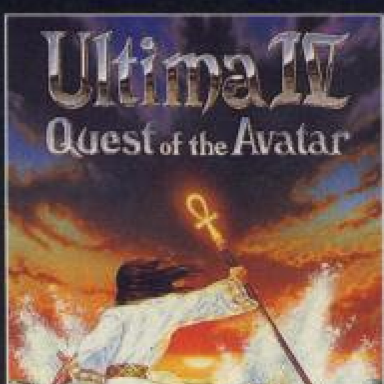
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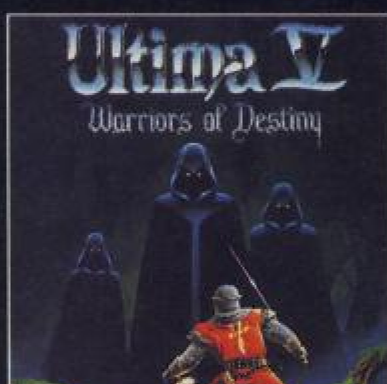
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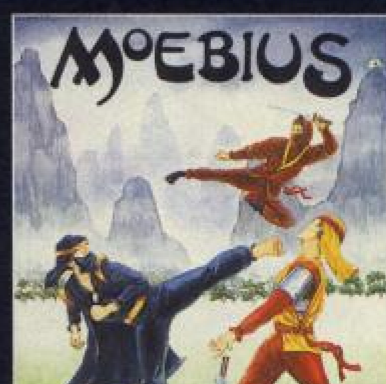
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# JULY

Throughout July it drizzled, and we wondered where the Summer had disappeared to. With 34 games in for review, we also wondered what had happened to the so-called summer slump!

Sensible Software's colourful stunner, *Wizball* arrived from the auspices of **Ocean** and became a legend within a lunch time. 'Simply brilliant – one of the best presented, most graphically and aurally attractive and addictive pieces of software available' raved Gazza Penn. Oddly enough, many *Wizball* fans disagreed with our review, and thought the 96% overall mark to be too *low*!!

Another July Sizzler was the third in the *Leaderboard* series, this time called *World Class Leaderboard*. Plenty of new features had been added, and there were four new courses: three based on famous world courses; St Andrews, Doral Country Club and Champions Cypress Creek, and another, The Gauntlet Club, specially designed by **Access** to test a *Leaderboard* expert's abilities to the full!

Another number three was *Spy Vs Spy III: Arctic Antics*, which was met with a mixed reception. Julian admitted that he 'liked it a lot', but Gary confessed to 'getting a little bored with the *Spy* series'. Consequently the 75% overall mark was a compromise.

The White Wizard was dead impressed with *Bureaucracy*, a strange adventure produced with the combined talents of *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author **Douglas Adams** and adventure specialists **Infocom**, and awarded a Sizzler mark of 90%. Old Whitey also cast his wand over **Melbourne House**'s second part to the *Lord of the Rings* adventure trilogy, but at 55% wasn't impressed. 'It doesn't seem destined to share the fame of its predecessors' quoth he.

**Ocean** provided a winner with their 3D isometric forced perspective World War II arcade adventure, *The Great Escape*. At 89% it just missed a Sizzler rating.

Running in at a percent less was **US Gold**'s whodunnit game, *Killed Until Dead*. 'I'm confident that this will appeal to thriller enthusiasts as well as those who take their murders with a pinch of laughter' said newly promoted Assistant Editor Ciarán Brennan.

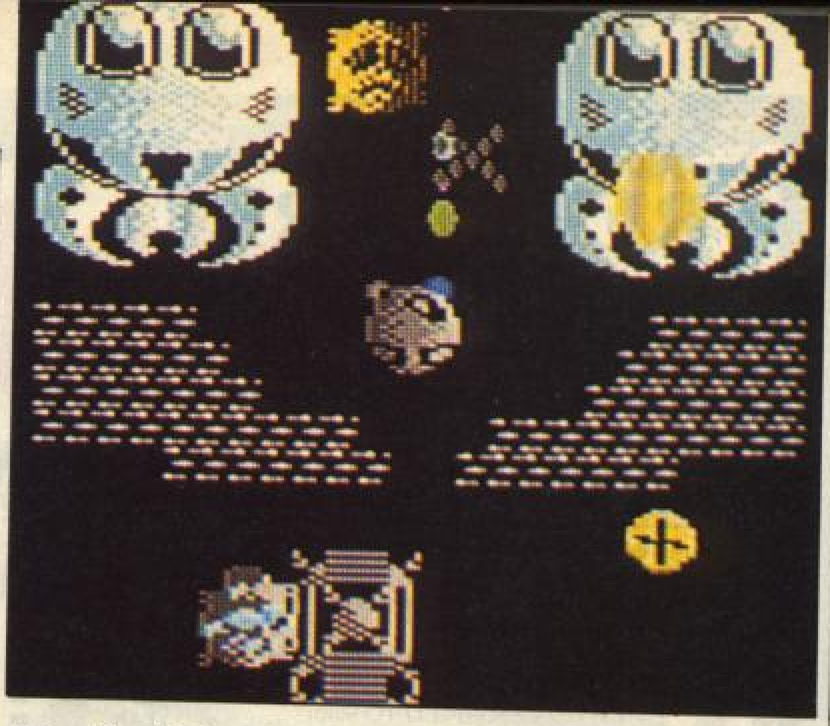
'It exists in its own right and is essentially incomparable' said Julian Rignall about **Nu Wave**'s weird and wonderful logic game, *IQ*. It wasn't a commercial hit, but is treasured by those who bought it.

**Palace** stirred up much controversy with *Barbarian*. Many objected to the adverts that had Maria Whittaker's forefront at the forefront, and some even found the game a little too much to bear. Well, the ZZAP! team thoroughly enjoyed it. 'Yeah! All the thrills and spills of nightmarish abattoir' enthused gore-fiend Rignall, 'blood spurts, decapitated heads flying around, guts, gore and hunchback cripples dragging away corpses'. Thank you very much.

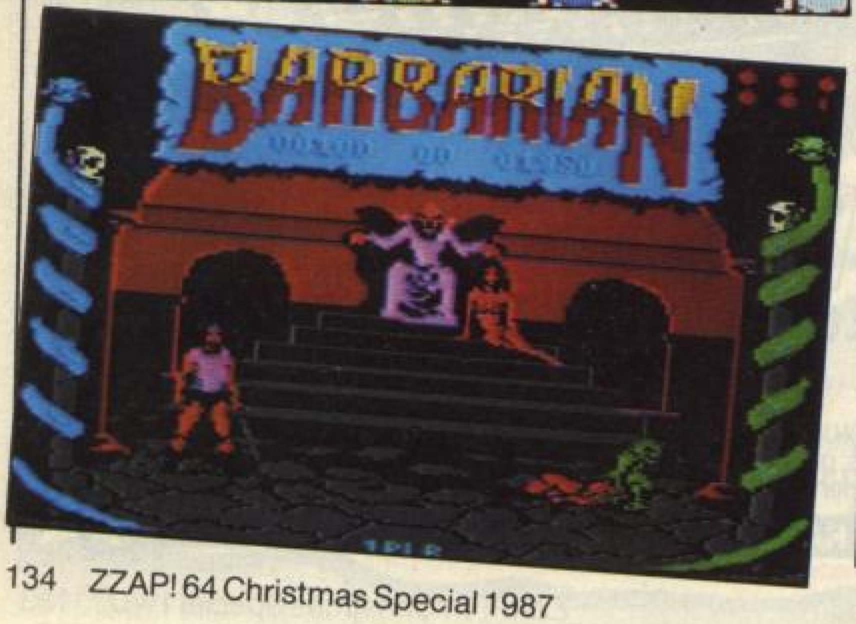
*I-I-I-I-I, Ball* the colourful and noisy *Nemesis*-clone-cum-racing game from **F-F-F-Firebird** boasted a brilliant soundtrack and sampled speech, and burst in to receive a rapturous 80%. 'It's 199 pence of sheer fun' said Paul.

A new company called **Starlight** made a none-too-impressive start with their first three releases. *Deathscape*, a 3D space game was the pick of the bunch, but only managed to scrape 55%. *Dogfight 2187* followed closely at 41%, and *Greyfell*, an excruciatingly slow 3D isometric forced perspective arcade adventure trailed with a paltry 30%. Not the best of starts, you must agree. Still, things were to get better . . .

On the 'officially licensed arcade conversion' front, July boasted an alarmingly mediocre quartet. **Imagine**'s *Mario Bros* came in at 55%, and was considered by all to be a very disappointing conversion. *Karate Champ*, the Grand-daddy of all one-on-one beat 'em ups was given the 64 treatment by **Americana**, but didn't inspire. Worse still was *Tag-Team Wrestling*, **US Gold**'s instantly forgettable wrestling game which was given a generous 25%. However, that wasn't the lowest mark. **Activision** were guilty in the first degree of producing one of the worst conversions ever. After many months of advertising, *Enduro Racer* arrived in the office . . . and was absolutely terrible. 'How Activision have got the bare faced cheek to call this abomination *Enduro Racer* is completely beyond my comprehension' gasped Rignall. 'Why on Earth have Activision attempted to convert, let alone release this abomination' wondered Steve. Still, even though it was awarded 16%, it still managed to get to number one the the 'software charts'. There's no justice in the world . . .








# AUGUST

'Say hello, Wave goodbye' was the innocuous headline which was to hail a time of turmoil. After 27 issues at ZZAP! Gary Penn decided to leave and embark on a 'secret mission', leaving ZZAP! in the hands of Ciarán Brennan.

On the software side, celebrations were in order – the first Gold Medal game of 1987 finally arrived courtesy of **Ocean**. 'Let me start by saying *Head Over Heels* is one of the finest pieces of software that I've ever seen' said an authoritarian Ciarán. Some readers failed to understand why the graphics had been give 98% when they were 'only two colours'. Well, oh complainers, they're beautifully detailed, brilliantly animated and are presented in a thoroughly convincing 'solid' 3D. Satisfied?

*The Last Ninja* arrived after much hype from **System 3**, and Sizzled at 94%. 'It's one of those rare games that offers hours of consistently puzzling and enjoyable gameplay' enthused Ciarán.

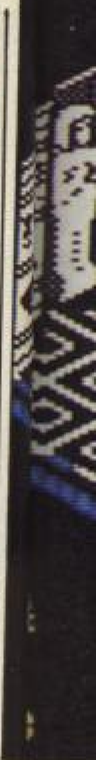
On the other hand, *Defender of the Crown* arrived from **Mirrorsoft** without any hype at all. The ZZAP! crew had already seen the Amiga version, and wondered whether the Commodore version was a mite ambitious. They needn't have worried – designers Cinemaware had done a marvellous job, and it notched a Sizzling 94%. It went on to become the biggest selling Commodore disk game of all time . . .

A novel flight simulator called *Twin Tornado* had an interesting option – it gave two users the opportunity to link their Commodores and engage in a one-on-one dogfight. The single player mode had a computer opponent to battle.

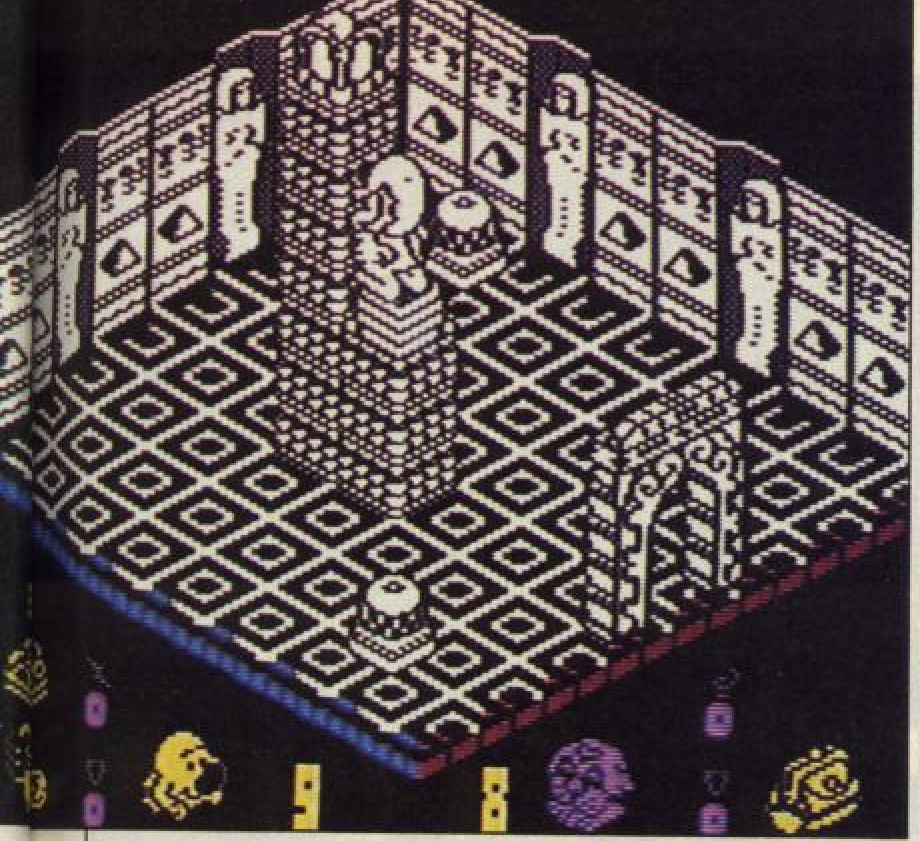
Another simulation arrived the form of *Revs Plus*, but this one had its feet planted firmly on the ground and put the player in control of a Ralt 3 Novamotor racing car. It was awarded a creditable 83%, but there was much mixed feeling, with Julian thinking it was 'outstanding' and Steve and Ciarán being not so keen.

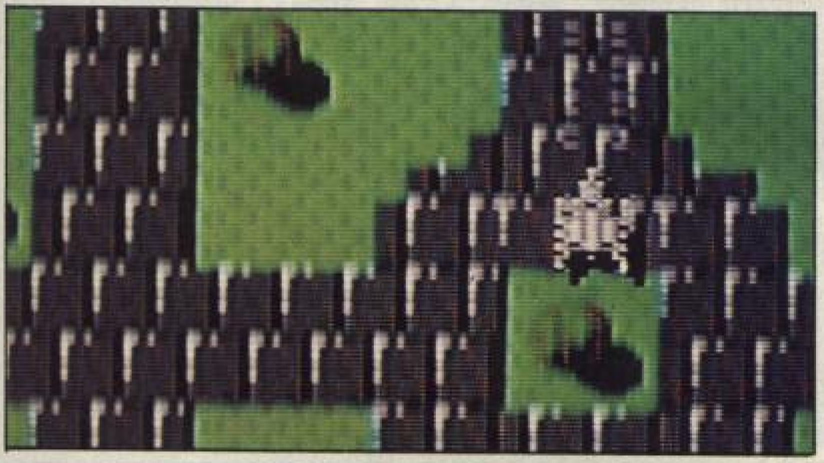
While the White Wizard battled *The Lurking Horror* in **Infocom**'s Sizzling adventure, **Gremlin Graphics**' *Thing bounced Back* to mixed opinions over its 86% overall mark.

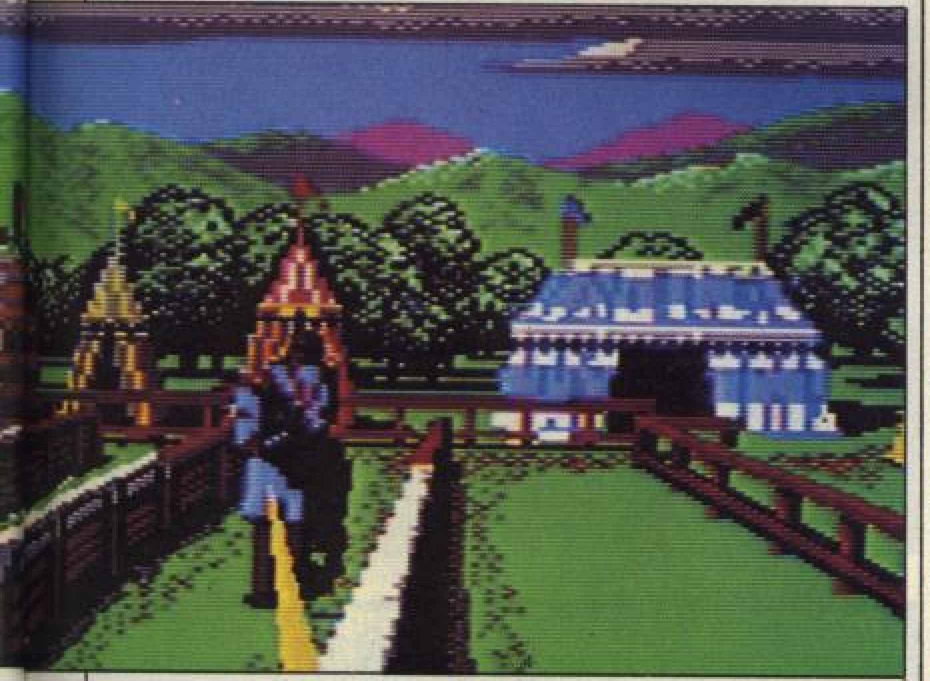
*Oink* (84%) was the odd sound-









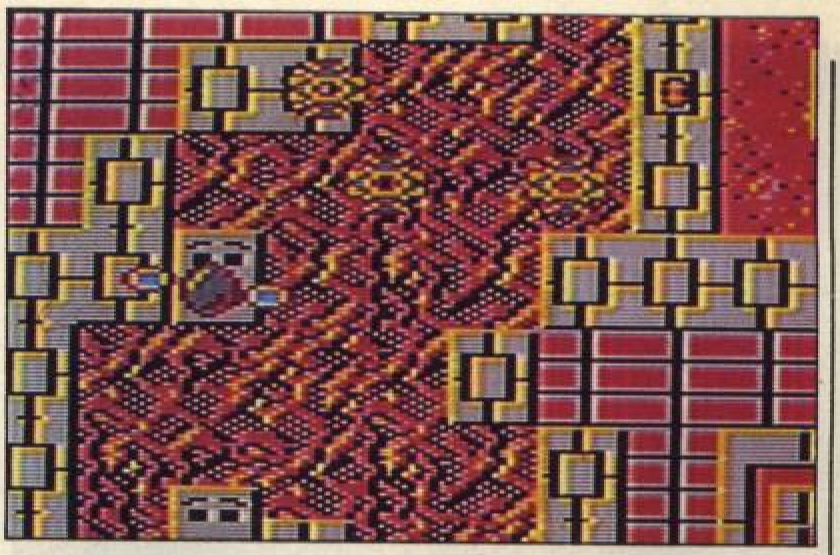


ing **CRL** 'official game of the comic', but its three obscure sub-games were all extremely appealing. '*Oink* was one of the strangest comics to appear last year, and the game looks like following the same path in the computer world' observed Paul.

Arcade licences abounded in August, with *Mag Max* and *Slap Fight* from **Imagine**, **US Gold**'s *Metrocross* and *Wonder Boy* and *Quartet* from **Activision**.

*Mag Max* was the cause of much derision, and its extremely poor graphics and gameplay helped gain its 39% overall mark. Vertically scrolling *Slap Fight* made up for **Imagine**'s mistake, and received 80%. Both *Metrocross* and *Wonder Boy* were regarded as reasonable conversions of poor arcade machines, and were awarded 53% and 52% respectively. Bringing up the rear, and looking as if it came from one, was *Quartet*, a badly programmed conversion severely lacking gameplay. The 15% overall mark seemed almost too generous!

**Melbourne House** made yet another bid for fame and fortune with *Wiz* (33%), but missed the mark by a mile. 'Who'd pay nine pounds for this?' Julian wondered. 'I wouldn't' he added for good measure. That was the last game Melbourne released before being bought up by Mastertronic . . .



# SEPTEMBER

The end of the school holidays saw a re-shuffle in the ZZAP! team. Ciarán Brennan, the ebullient Dubliner began his term of office by having his house burnt down! Anything for attention . . .

Apart from these behind-the-scenes activities, it was business as usual with the bright ZZAP! cover featuring an aerial skateboarder, signifying the release of **Epyx**' latest sports simulation, *California Games*.

Initially high expectations were totally fulfilled by one of the most innovative and polished sports packages yet. The six games were all brilliant, and each member of the team took to his own favourite: Ciarán went for the Flying Disk (or Frisbee), Steve hung ten on the Surfing while Julian favoured the Hacky Sack, and rapidly ran up a sickeningly high score.

*California Games* duly received a Gold Medal and was praised to the hilt: 'If you gather up all the previous superlatives from previous **Epyx** reviews and add them together, you just might go halfway to describing *California Games*' claimed Steve. Ciarán stated that '. . . the pictures and sound generated by this program are atmospheric beyond belief.' Julian summed up by saying, 'Recommending it is a formality'.

**Epyx**' release was not the only high achiever, since there were four other Sizzlers awarded this month, the first of which was **Hewson**'s newest horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, *Zynaps*.

Seeming a little too difficult at first, the game's true qualities shone through and were promptly recognised as such. A visiting Gary Liddon was recruited to give *Zynaps* the thumbs-up, saying, 'Head and shoulders above the competition, *Zynaps* is a sure-fire winner, bound to be a hit with arcade enthusiasts both young and old.' Julian and Ciarán were equally keen.

**Gremlin Graphics**' spherical hero returned to a slightly mixed reception in *Re-Bounder*, but still managed to acquire a Sizzler. Comparisons to the original were inevitable, but Steve's comment represented the general feeling: '*Re-Bounder* has managed to retain the playability of its predecessor – but it's far more flexible, and should hold the attention for longer than *Bounder* ever did'.

**Software Projects**, who had previously been rather quiet since *Escape from Singe's Castle*, visited ZZAP! Towers to bring *Star Paws*. This unusual chase game was in much the same vein as *Road Runner* (less favourably reviewed that issue), and featured some lovely graphics and tremendous parallax scrolling. Gary Liddon provided a suitable eulogy: 'The greatest recommendation I can afford to this game is that it's one of the few games we played because we wanted to and not because we had to'.

The final Sizzler for September came in the shape of **Rainbird**'s superlative illustrated adventure, *Guild of Thieves*. The White Wizard, never at a loss for words, summed up his review by stating, '*Guild of Thieves* is an excellent program, combining Magnetic Scrolls' programming expertise with a more accessible scenario and some excellent puzzles . . . even at £19.95 you can't go far wrong'.







# OCTOBER

ZZAP! welcomed October with a stunning Oli Frey cover (possibly his best for some months), featuring the *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit*, which was previewed that issue – a portent of good things to come . . .

The main event of the month was the release of **Firebird**'s brilliant Taito coin-op conversion, *Bubble Bobble*, which had the unlikeliest pair of heroes – a pair of cuddly, bubble-spitting brontosaurs. The game was incredibly playable and once again all work ceased. The team were suitably impressed and awarded it a Golden Gong, unanimous in the opinion that, as Steve put it, 'This has got to be one of the best platform games of all time . . . if not *the* best!'. Ciarán advised you to ' . . . go out and get it now and experience some fun graphics, silly sounds, whacky gameplay and, most importantly, a lot of laughs'. 'A licensing triumph which shouldn't be missed at any cost', exclaimed Julian – cue nodding heads all round.

The second award-winner of October was the Sizzling release from **Starlight**, a software house who'd failed to cause more than a ripple up until that time. The game in question was *Red LED*, an adventure/shoot 'em up set across enormous 3D landscapes, which immediately grabbed everyone's imagination. Steve was swift to comment: '*Red LED* contains some of the most realistic and imaginative dioramas I've ever seen on a home computer'. 'It can only be described as brilliant', Julian exclaimed, telling you to 'Go out and get this game – it's something really special.' Paul summarised the general feeling: 'If **Starlight** can keep up this standard, they should be selling games for a long time to come'. Praise indeed.

The third accolade of October was Simon Nichol's sequel to *Crazy Comets*, entitled *Mega Apocalypse*. This frantic shoot 'em up had superb graphics and some stunning five-channel music and effects, which were judged to be worth an incredible 96%. Although it was considered to be a little on the hard side (you could have ten goes in as many minutes), *Mega Apocalypse* still Sizzled, and deservedly so. '*Mega Apocalypse* is a shoot 'em up *par excellence* – watch out for it', recommended Julian.

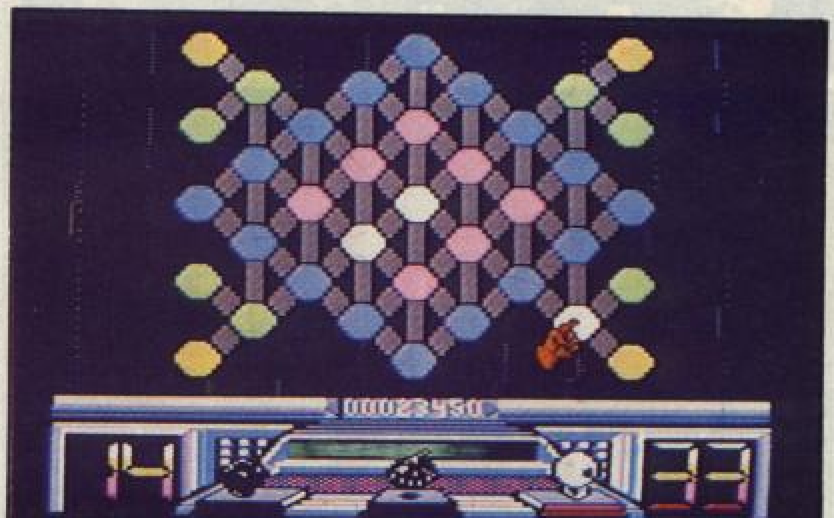
Philippa Irving also managed to get in on the act, and awarded a Sizzler to **SSI**'s *B-24 Flight Simulator*. Impressed by the atmosphere generated and historical documentation, Ms Irving slotted *B-24* into the 90% just-Sizzling bracket.

Budget games were allotted their own section in October, (to the disgrace of many readers) and we immediately awarded four newly-designated Silver Medals. Rockford returned in **Prism**'s re-releases of *Boulderdash* and *Rockford's Riot*, and Firebird's *Arcade Classics* and Jeff Minter's *Revenge of the Mutant Camels II* walked off with a medal each.

Still in the budget section, *The Further Adventures of Alice in Videoland* had the dubious honour of being awarded the lowest overall mark ever. A lowly 3% was given to the game, which was graphically abysmal, unplayable and, the final nail in the coffin, freeze-framed from the disk version, so you could only play the first level before the computer reset!

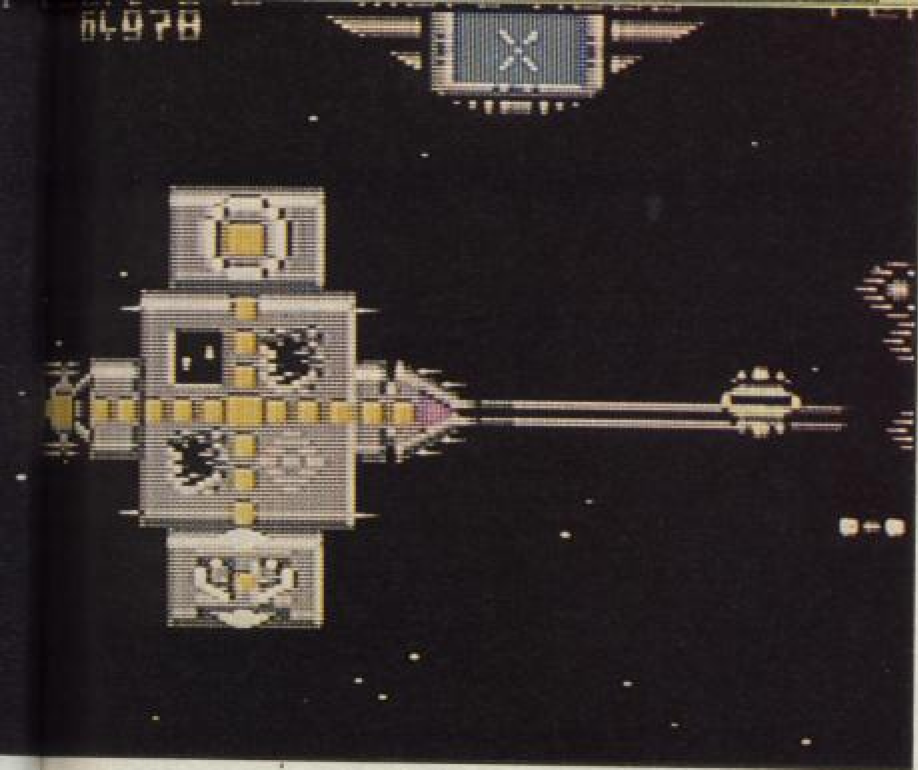
A new regular feature appeared with Brendon Kavanagh's Postmark – whose first duty was to explain the pros and cons of PBM (Play By Mail) games.

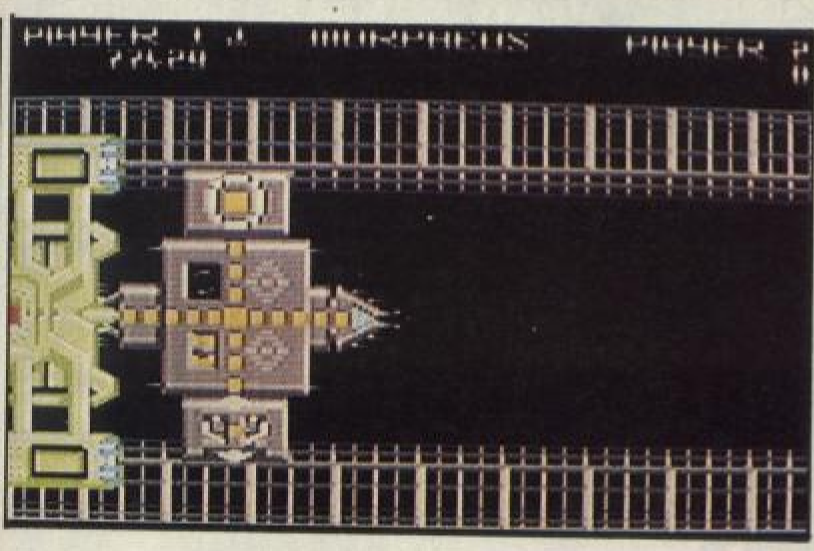
And so October bowed out and became history . . .

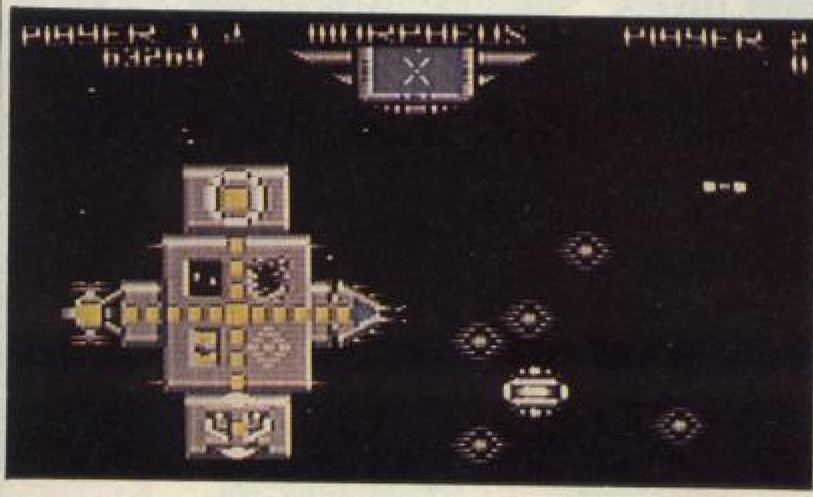


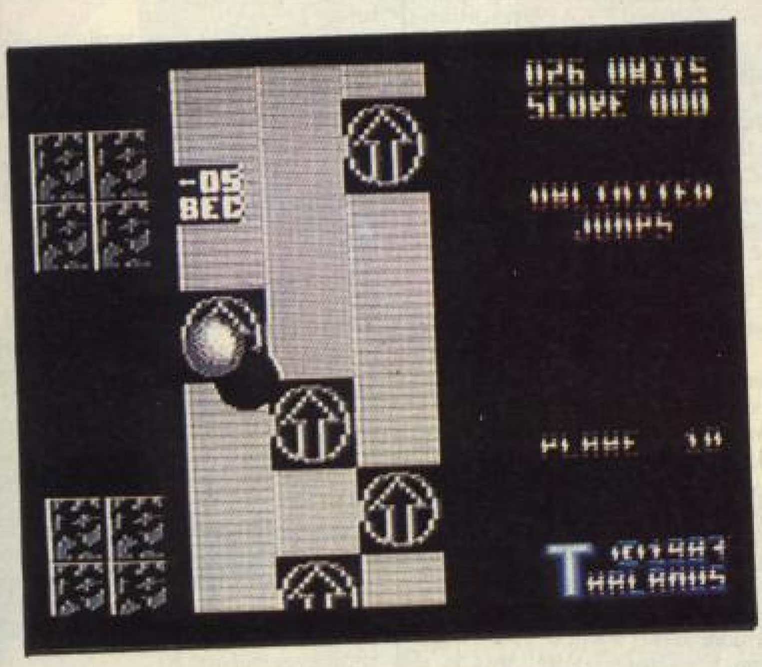










# NOVEMBER

Guy Fawkes' month saw a slightly fatter ZZAP! than usual, with 148 pages crammed with goodies, features and the very first 3D tips section, complete with the trendy red and green glasses. A new staffer also began his pennance – fresh faced ex-yobbo Nik Wild was demoted from the advertising department to the bowels of the ZZAP! office.

It was also a decent month on the games front, with four Sizzlers and a Silver Medal to warm the cockles of the most frosty gamester's heart.

**System 3**'s *International Karate +* saw a revival in the beat 'em genre, successfully halting all work for an afternoon. The increased range of moves and superb static backdrop made *IK+* a firm favourite.

The second beat' em up of the month was **Ocean**'s conversion of *Renegade*, which was also deemed good enough to scrape a Sizzler.

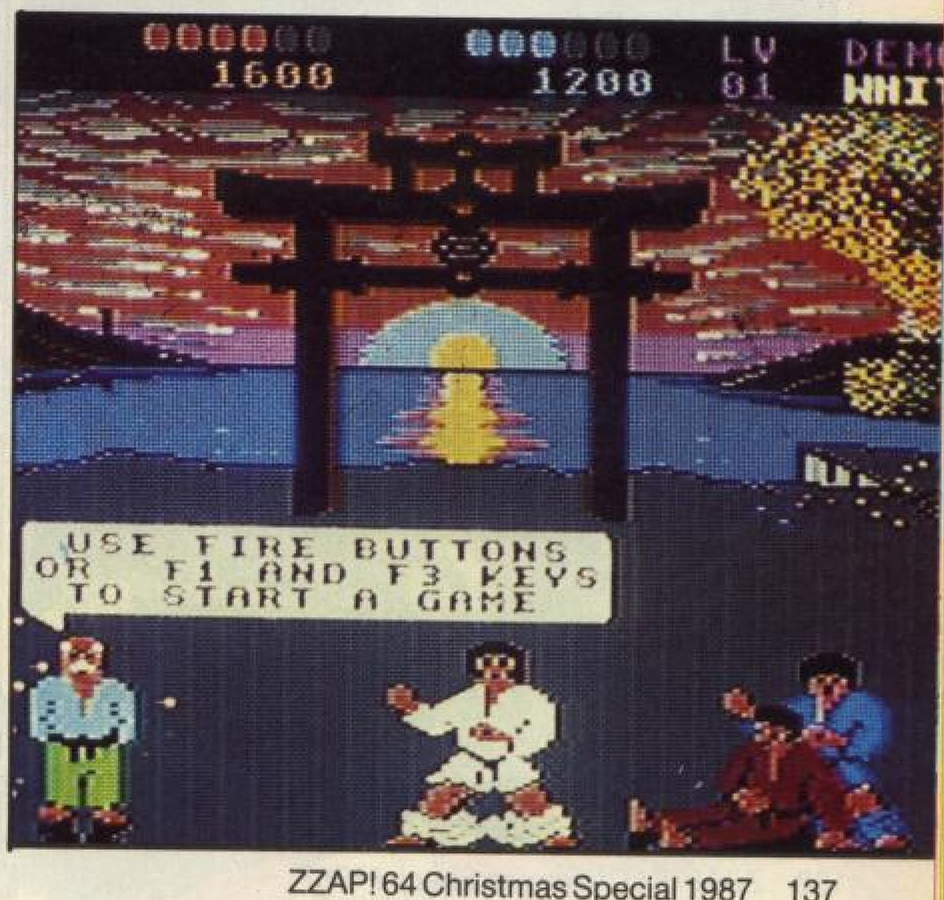
Stavros Fasoulas' last game before being called up for National Service in the Finnish army was *Quedex*, a polished and highly enjoyable game involving a series of dextral puzzles. Julian had nothing but praise: 'The thought that has gone into the game's design is admirable – *Quedex* is beautifully designed, highly original and wholeheartedly recommended . . . ', while Steve was impressed enough to call for a *Quedex II*.

To complete the quartet, Andrew Braybrook's long-awaited strategy shoot 'em up *Morpheus* arrived in the office – to some heated discussion. Some liked it, some didn't, but everyone agreed that it was worthy of Sizzler status. Steve was suitably impressed: ' . . . *Morpheus* is without doubt one of the most finely constructed games ever written for the 64'. Julian was ambivalent in his comments, suggesting that you 'tried before buying', but Ciarán, as ever, had the last word: 'Do yourself a favour and buy it as soon as you can'.

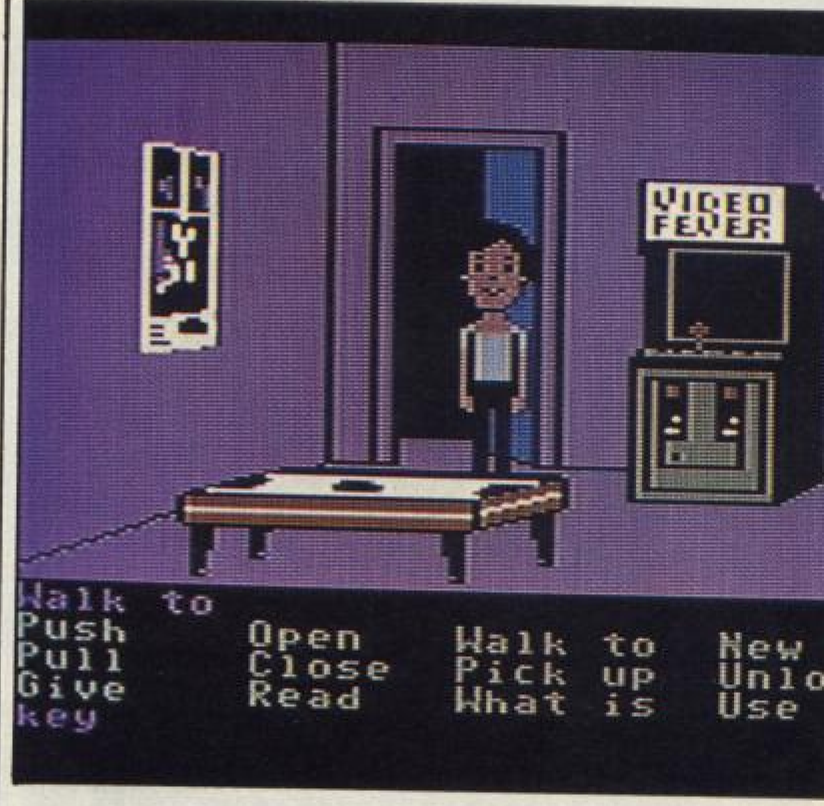
*Solomon's Key*, a brilliant platform puzzle game was received favourably, but just missed out on Sizzlerdom with 86%.

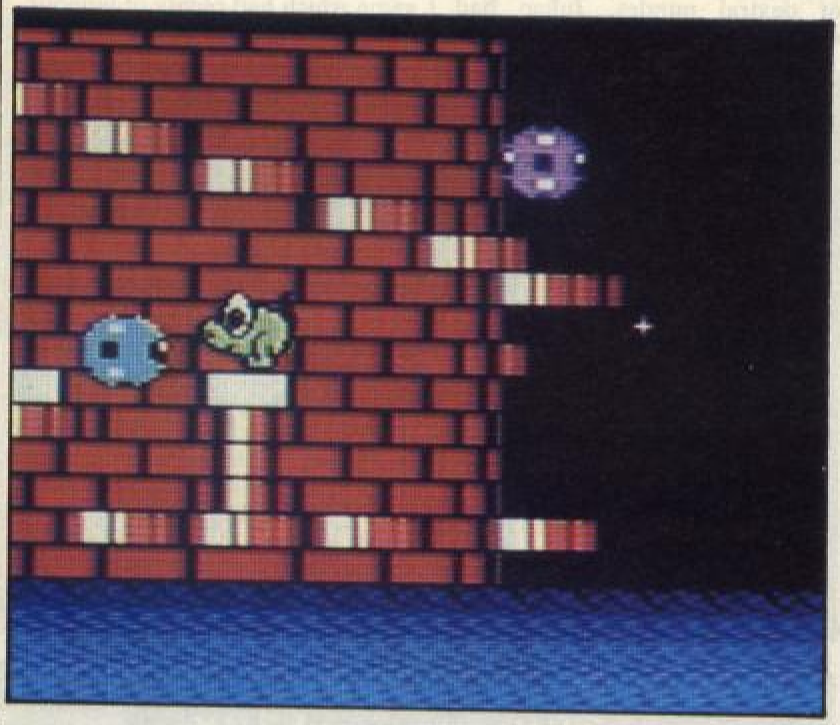
The final accolade of the month went to *Joe Blade*, **Players**' budget game which had plenty of humour and appealed to all and sundry.

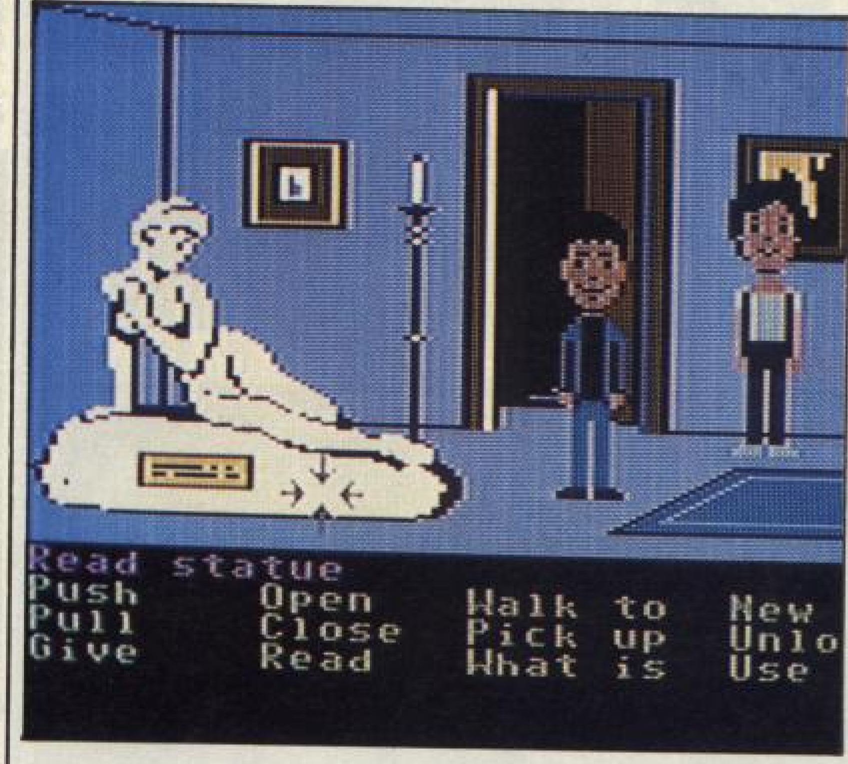


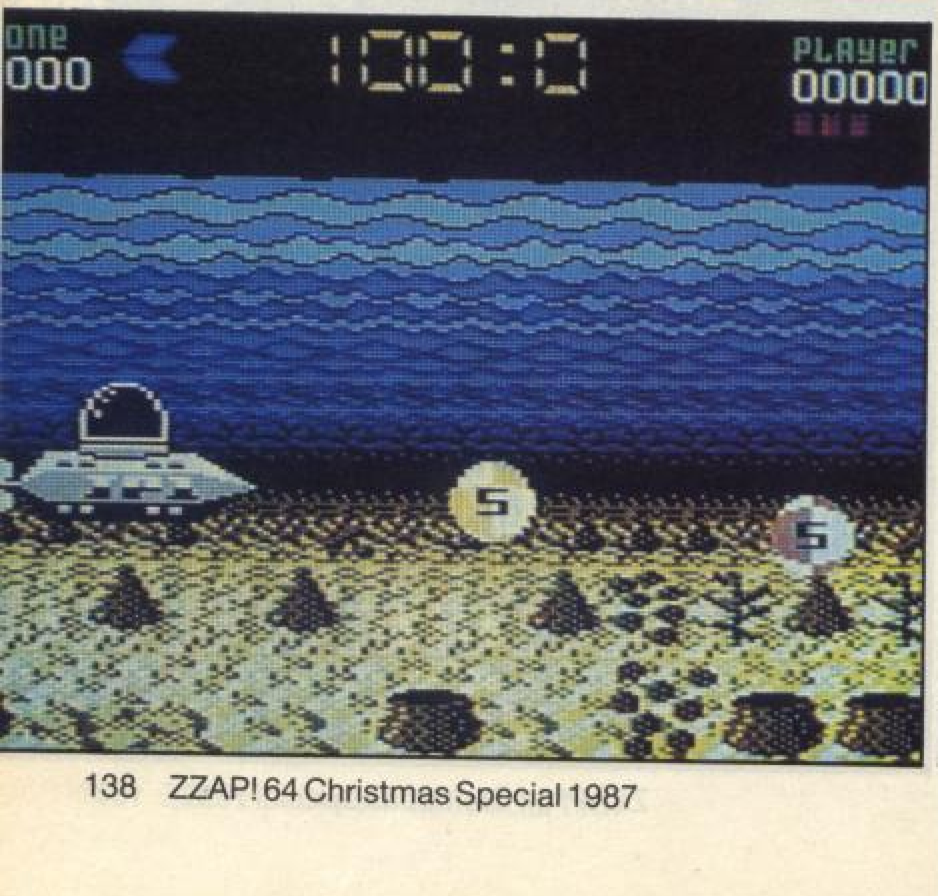








# DECEMBER

The festive season was swiftly upon us and, in true ZZAP! tradition there were more comings and goings. Ciarán left in search of his inner self, leaving Julian (the last of the original ZZAP! team) to take the helm.

ZZAP! continued undaunted, however, and the office was deluged with quality products: three Gold Medals and four Sizzlers arrived – just in time for the Christmas stocking!

**Outlaw** 's *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit* arrived to rapturous applause and, after bringing the office to a standstill, was immediately given a Gold Medal.

Managing to drag themselves away from the 64, the team heaped adulation on it: '*The Shoot 'em up Construction Kit* is a milestone in computing history. It mightn't appeal to all 64 owners, due to the amount of attention it requires, but if you've ever wished you could design your own game, this is a dream come true', exclaimed Julian.

GM number two was pinned on **Elite**'s racing conversion, *Buggy Boy*. Its brilliant gameplay and incredible speed made it a firm favourite with all who played.

The trio was completed by *Nebulus*, a surprise release from **Hewson** . With almost no pre-release hype or advertisements, this unusual rotating platform game took the office by storm.

December was well represented on the Sizzler front, with *Maniac Mansion, Bangkok Knights, Zig Zag* and *Computer Scrabble De Luxe*, while a single Silver Medal went to classic re-release, *Beach Head II*. And that brings us bang up to date.

So, as the year of 1987 slips quietly over the event horizon, we can only hope that 1988 also brings us plenty to shout about, in the shape of more quality 64 games than ever before . . .



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ZZAP! COMP

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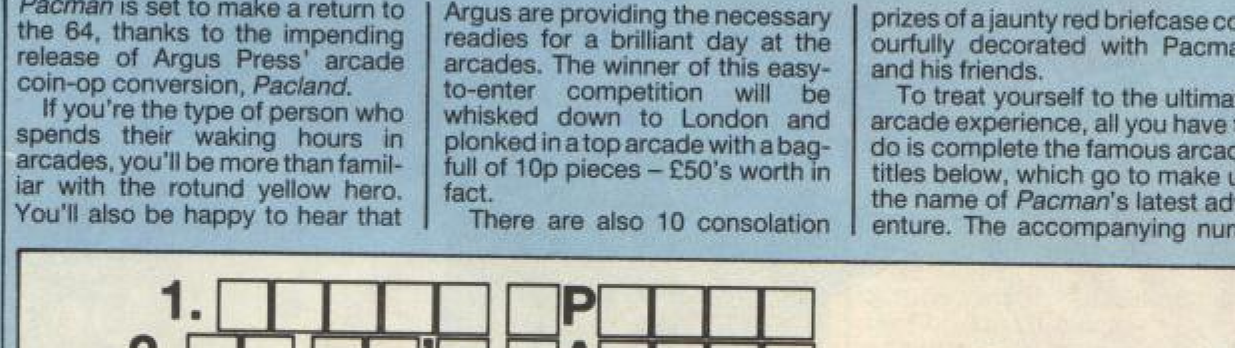


*Pacman* is set to make a return to the 64, thanks to the impending release of Argus Press' arcade coin-op conversion, *Pacland*.

If you're the type of person who spends their waking hours in arcades, you'll be more than familiar with the rotund yellow hero. You'll also be happy to hear that Argus are providing the necessary readies for a brilliant day at the arcades. The winner of this easy-to-enter competition will be whisked down to London and plonked in a top arcade with a bag-full of 10p pieces – £50's worth in fact.

There are also 10 consolation prizes of a jaunty red briefcase colourfully decorated with Pacman and his friends.

To treat yourself to the ultimate arcade experience, all you have to do is complete the famous arcade titles below, which go to make up the name of *Pacman*'s latest adventure. The accompanying numbered clues should help . . .




**1.** Fingertip athletics.
**2.** Much ado about an Englishman's home.
**3.** The glass houses inhabited by Bentley.
**4.** Sequel to the racing game which was in front at the start.
**5.** The follow-up to a gripping racing game.
**6.** Son of a jack-ass gorilla.
**7.** Two-way scrolling protection racket.

Put your answers on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope and send them to: **PACLAND ARCADE COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than the 14th of January, 1988.

NOTE: This competition is not open to members of the ZZAP! team called Julian Rignall.

# VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!




**The Festive Season is here once more, and with it comes the ZZAP! Readers Awards. This is your chance to tell members of the software industry what you think of their games, programmers and advertisements. Vote for the games, the people and the adverts which you feel are worthy of praise. Fill in the form over the page and send it to us post haste, so our Database Minion can get to work analysing the results. The first 10 forms drawn out of the bag on 20th January 1988 – the closing date – will earn their senders £30 worth of software and a superb ZZAP! T-Shirt!**

**The results should be published in the March issue of ZZAP! and shortly thereafter the certificates of accolade will be awarded to the winning companies. If that's all clear, stop your grinning and get thinking . . .**

**In each appropriate category enter the name of the program and the software house for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1987 copyright to be eligible. There's no need to fill in every category – if you can't think of a suitable candidate, leave the relevant category blank. Obviously, the more you fill in the better the end result will be.**

**Once you've completed as much of the form as possible, remove this page from the magazine (or photocopy it) and send it to us. Don't forget to write your name, address and T-Shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in CAPITAL LETTERS!** ▶

**BEST GAME OVERALL**
Title & Software House

**BEST PLATFORM GAME**
Title & Software House

**BEST SHOOT 'EM UP**
Title & Software House

**BEST ARCADE CONVERSION**
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And, for the most outstanding programming achievement of 1987

**STATE OF THE ART AWARD**
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**Please send this form to ZZAP! READERS AWARDS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB to arrive no later than January 15th 1988**

Readers' Awards

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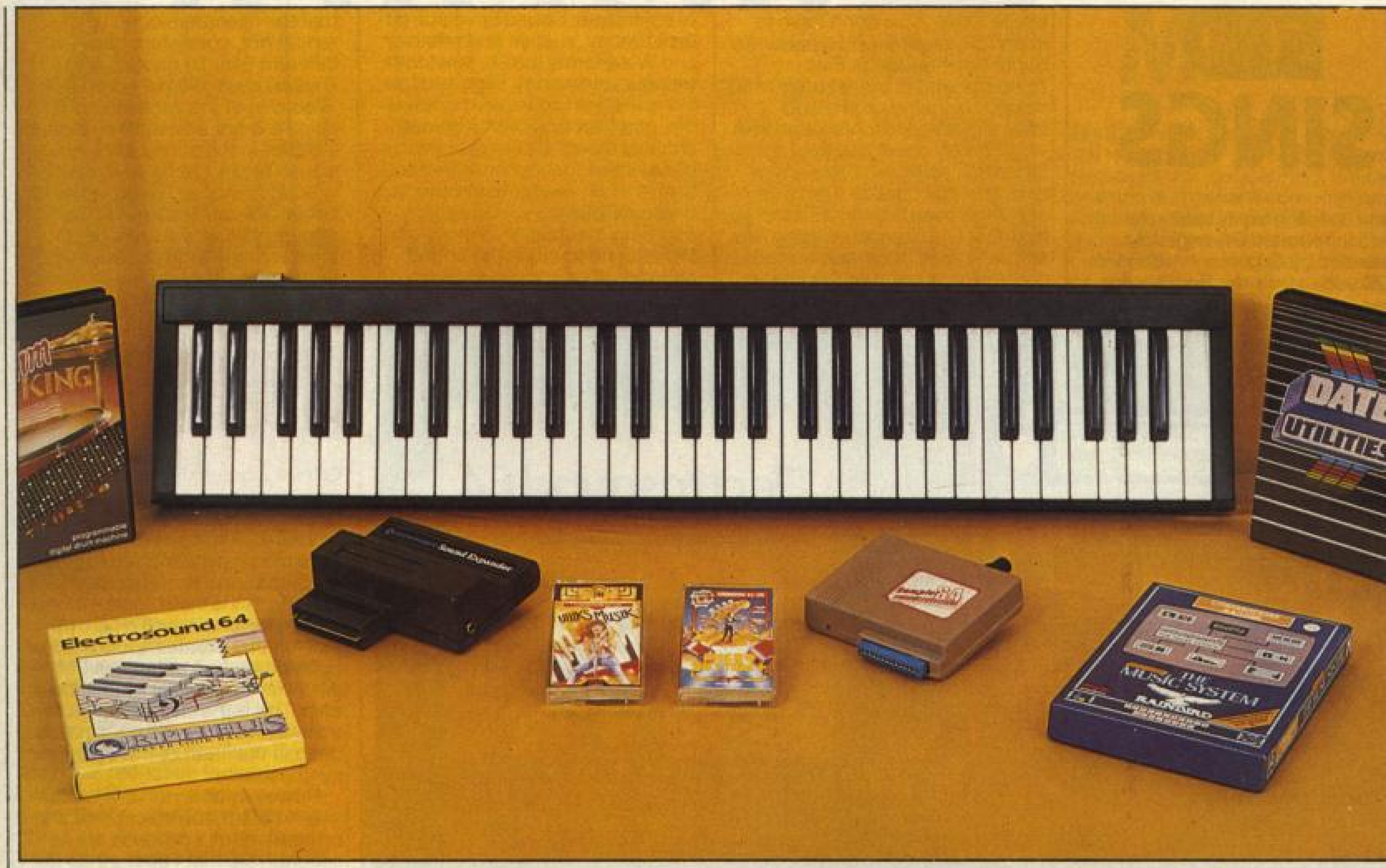
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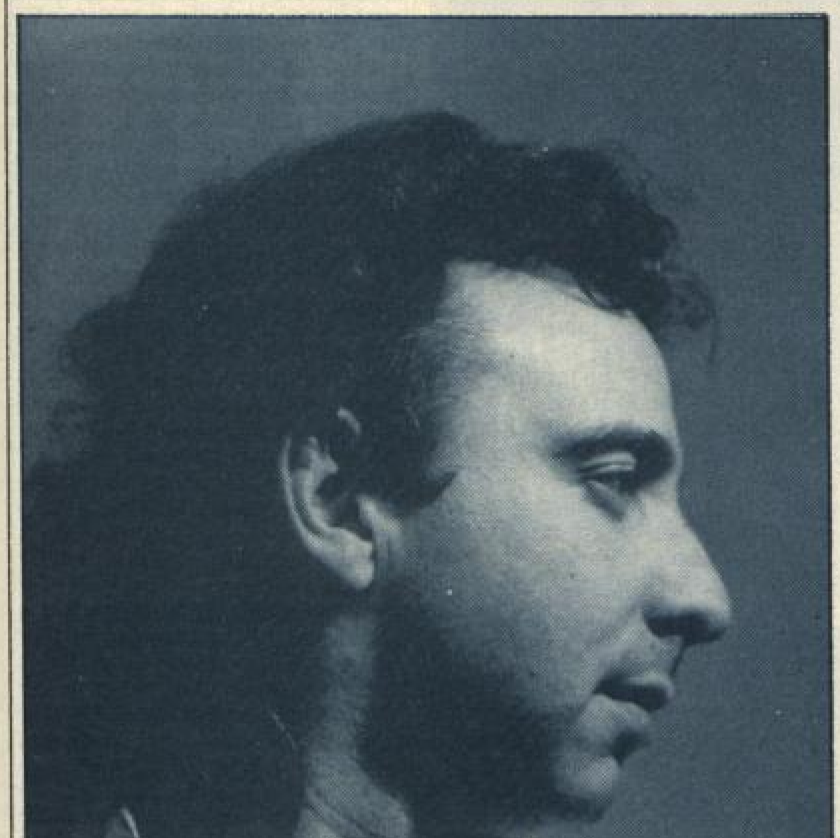
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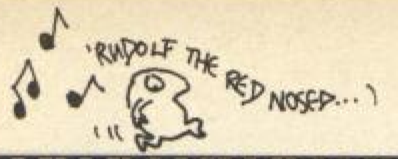
# A MUSICAL INTERLUDE

**Are you interested in music and computers? JON BATES, part-time CRASH music reviewer and occasional pop artisté casts a critical eye over the music programs currently available for the Commodore 64, and gives his advice on how to wisely invest your Christmas pennies.**

Still wondering about 16-Bit? Should you dump your 64/128 and go for an Atari ST? As you'll see and read, there's rather a lot of 64 music packages to consider, and at quite reasonable prices too. In fact, if you're really hard up and want to enter the lower price end of the computer/music market, now is the time to buy.

The following programs may or may not have been reviewed in these hallowed pages before. If they have I'll quote the original review issue so that you can look it up.

Music software falls into several categories: programs using the SID chip only, non-MIDI, SID software that talks to synthesizers via MIDI, soft and hardware that is self-contained (usually using chips in the hardware), soft and hardware that uses MIDI, and MIDI soft and hardware that only creates sound if used in conjunction with a synthesizer. ▶

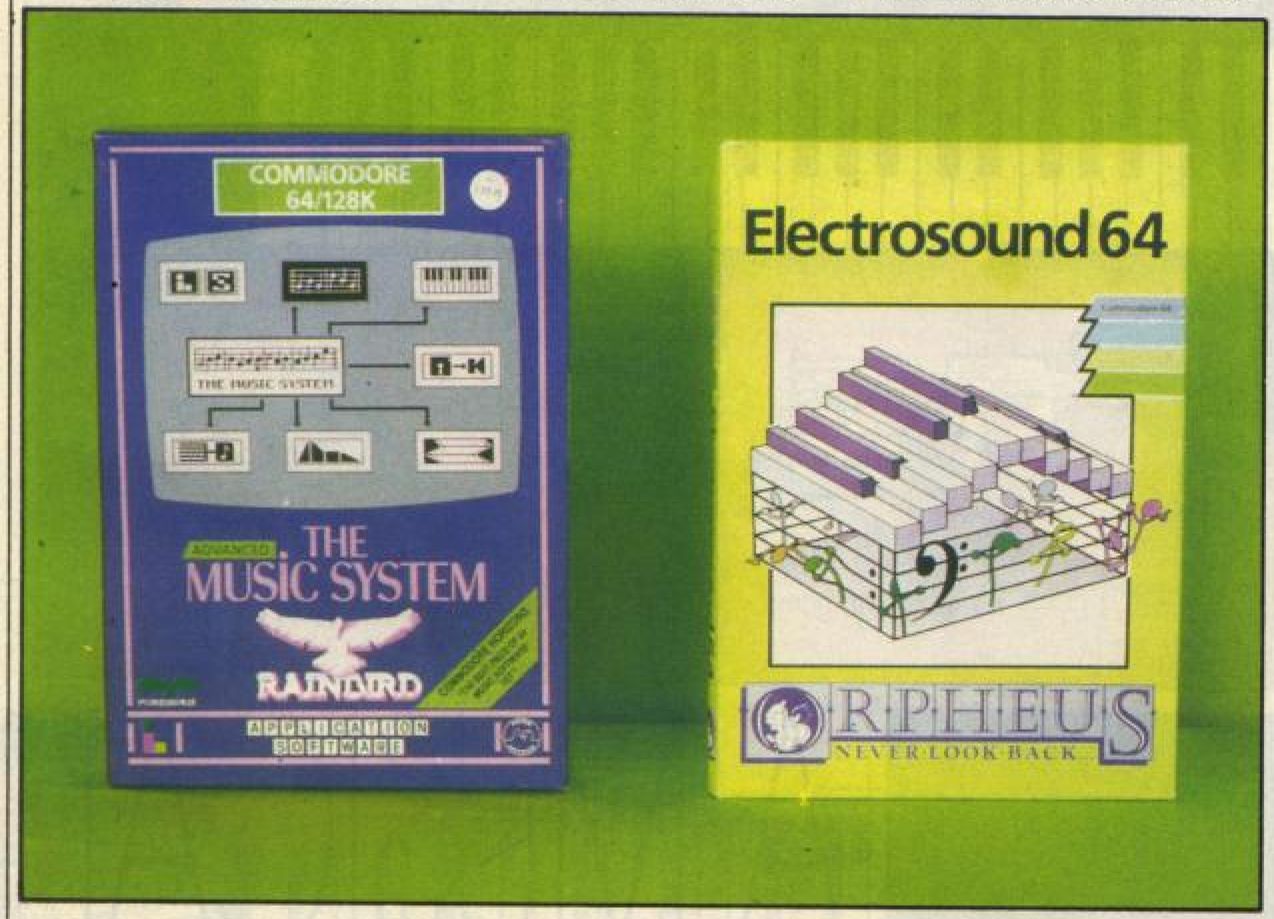


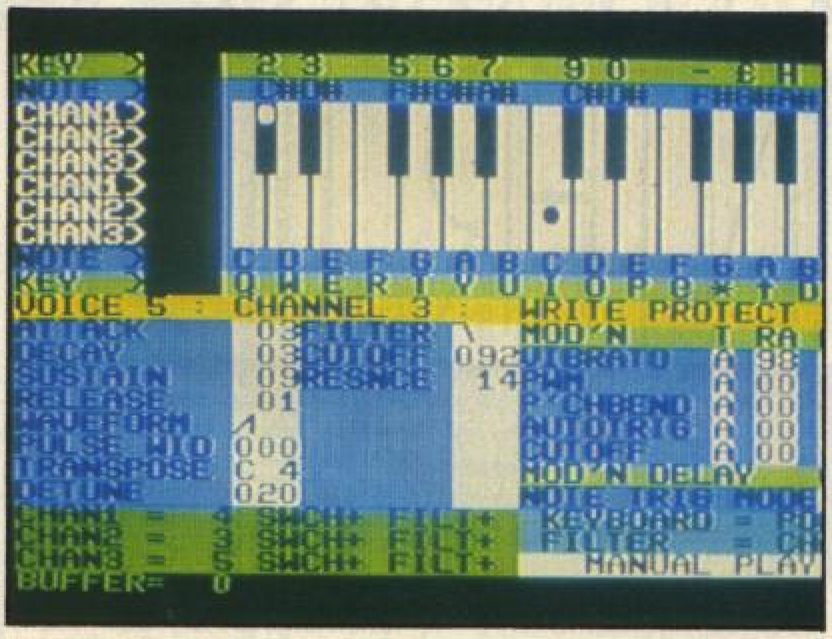

# SID SINGS

First up to the frosty testing bench is *Electrosound 64*, originally released by Orpheus in 1985 for £28 and received a Gold Medal review in Issue 8. It's since been deleted, but can still be found at a far cheaper price if you're prepared to hunt. It covers sound synthesis and sequencing in a very comprehensive manner, and is compatible with the keyboard overlays that were bundled with the 64 (which makes playing far easier, believe me).

The main display shows a piano keyboard and direct controls to the SID chip. You don't have to know lots about sound creation (to quote the manual) as *Electrosound* comes with a library of 50 voices (including drums and effects), for you to fool around with – and pretty good they are too. Since SID works on three channels, you can choose from a variety of keyboard configurations; from just one channel on its own to all three played together, or in succession on subsequent notes – which I found a bit weird as the keyboard takes the upper note as the most important, so trying to play chords produced strange and unexpected results.

The lower half of the display deals with the intricacies of SID. For easy sound creation this program comes out near the top of the list, especially if you use a joystick to whizz round the sound options. If you must know, the main areas of control are: Sound Envelope (attack, decay, sustain and release) and Waveforms (pulse, sawtooth, triangle, and noise). High and low filters and band pass are combinable, (the filter only works on one channel though), cut-off point can be selected and resonance added to give a full 'sweep' to the sound, plus oscillator synchronization and Ring modulation. Voices can be detuned to make the sound quite fat if the same sound is used on all three channels. Any newly made sounds can be named and filed to either disk or tape – which is very useful indeed.




The other half of the program is a step-time sequencer which works in the time-honoured fashion of making up short sequences (up to 20) which are then chained up into 'tracks' (5 maximum) to make up the tune as a whole. A clear graphic display and cassette recorder type controls make it very easy to use, although it's a bit limiting as you have to work in one fixed note value all the time.

As a general music utility that covers the SID creatively, *Electrosound* isn't at all bad.

Similar in approach to *Electrosound*, but on a more simplistic basis is the *Sound Studio* from Music Sales, which allows the user to program sounds from SID or use the library of 60 preset sounds and chop over to the sequencer and build up tracks using step or real-time. This has rather natty pop-up menus, although the notation for the sequencer is somewhat boring as it is a written out list of notes and their durations – why not graphic or music notation? It is MIDI compatible, but more of that later.

Whilst we are talking about the SID, it isn't a well-publicised fact that the filter mentioned is not, repeat *not*, consistent between different 64s. To quote a little-known press release from 1984, 'Because of the variation in SID chips it is not advisable to include the filter in the sound of commercial software. Doing so may result in sounds that are unexpected or not audible on some 64s.' So that may explain why some soundtracks sound good on your mate's 64, but absolute rubbish on yours.

## FREQUENCY MODULATION

Often found on display in large department stores is the *FM Sound Expander* from Music Sales (reviewed in Issue 17). Music Sales have made quite an effort to collar a large share of the 64 music market, and this is their biggie – a five-octave keyboard and a hardware bolt-on that creates sounds from none other than a Yamaha FM (short for Frequency Modulation) chip. This is the chip that launched a thousand hits – it's cousins lurk deep in the heart of the DX series synthesizers.

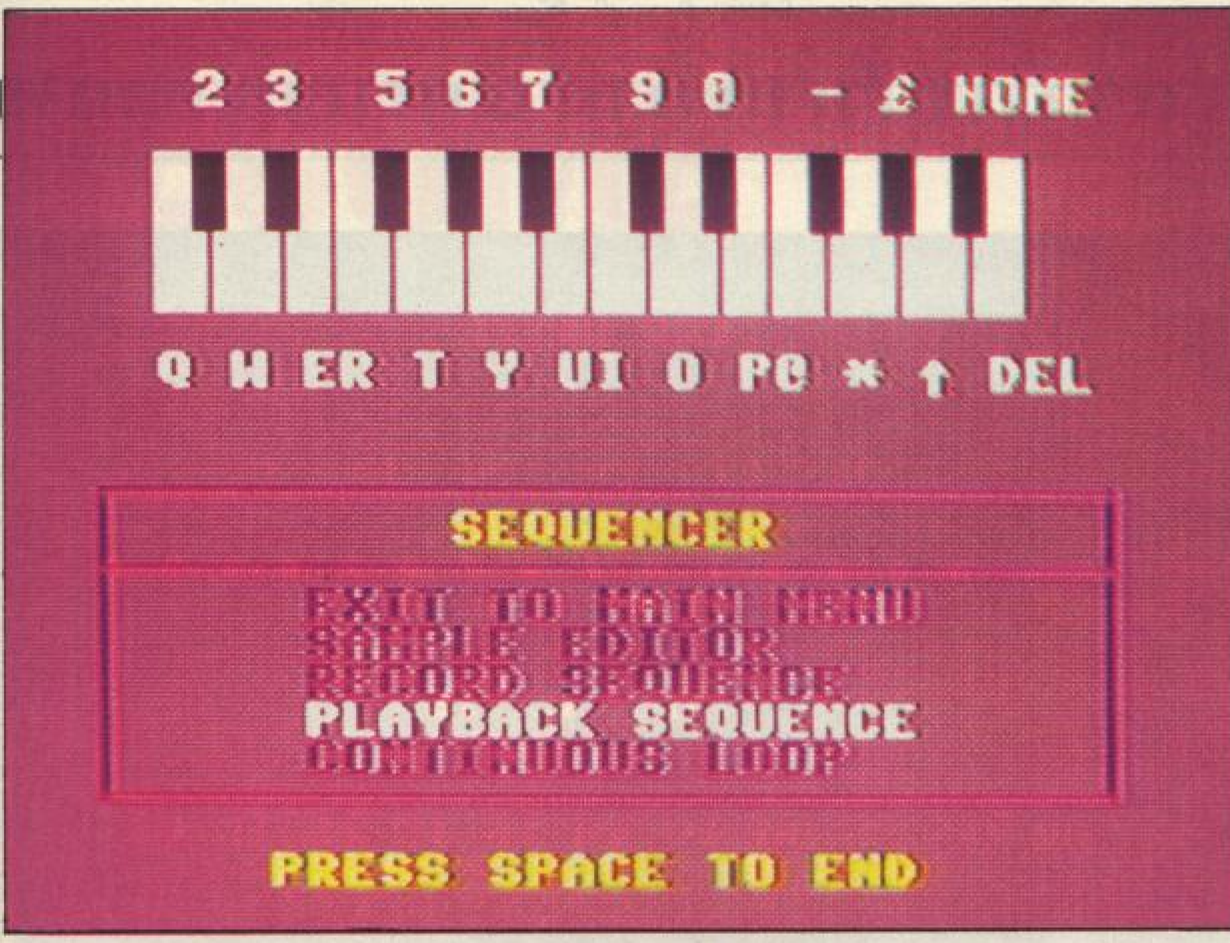
However, all is not as it would seem. In fact, the voices that it's programmed to produce are so second-rate that I opened up the hardware to verify the presence of the Yamaha chip. Well, it's there, but sounds remarkably as though it has been severely restricted in its use. At a rough guess it is only using half its power and the voices may well have been ROM packaged by Yamaha to limit the competition. In effect the *Sound Expander* turns the 64 into the equivalent of a single-keyboard that would cost about £150-£200, which in itself is a saving. The less said about the rhythm voices the better, but you have a good choice of patterns and the accompaniment features are reasonable – you know, auto bass and rhythm chords etc. It has an unfortunate 'riff' function which is of novelty value only as it disables the keyboard and leaves you listening aghast as it plays silly banjos and feeble electro-sounds. It is MIDI compatible, but the interface is not yet around to my knowledge. I can't honestly say that the *Expander* is my favourite music package at about £75.

There's an editor/composer package available for the *Expander* at £24.99, which gives you limited access to the 'operators', the components that go to make up the sounds. You can save up to 64 sounds and use the composer part of the program to create step-time sequences using music notation – useful.

## S-S-SAMPLING

Lots has been said about the sampling facility on 16-Bit machines. It should also be said that sampling




quality depends on quite a few more factors than the number of bits a sound is sliced up into. Without wishing to go into great detail (after all, this an overview), it's also dependent on the way in which the bits are used, the filtering and general noise reduction factors.

There are a few samplers available for the 64 – the top of the range being the *Microvox* from Supersoft, which retails at about £250. Next comes the *Datel Sound Sampler*, which is available at the far more acceptable price of £49.99 (it was reviewed in Issue 12). It's not as professional as the *Microvox*, but has very good editing features.

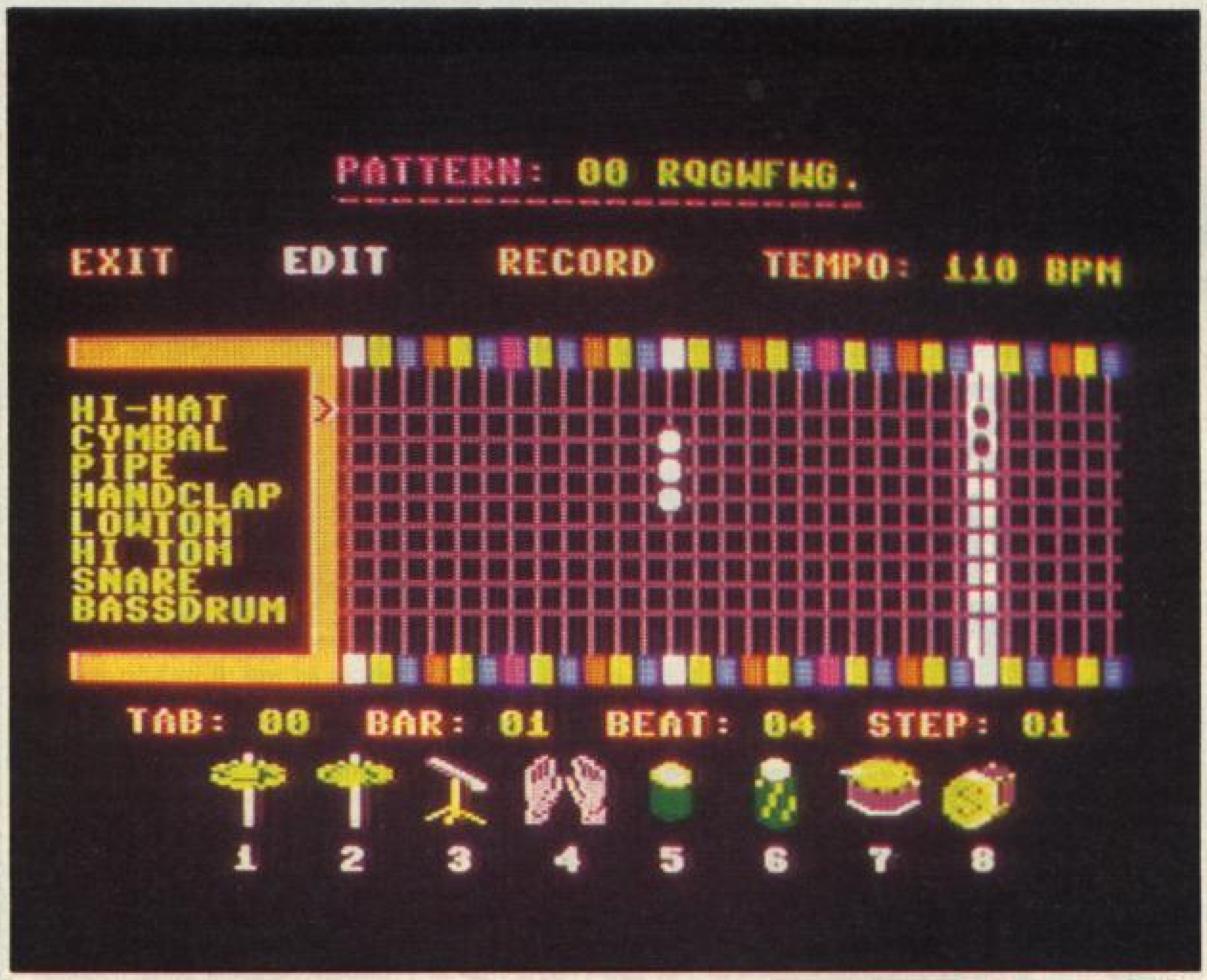
The hardware fits into the user port on the back of the 64 and accepts line or microphone inputs, giving a line output. The sampler comes bundled with a 30p microphone, which should be binned instantly – buy a decent one for far better results. Sample levels and lengths are set up, as well as a delay on the start of recording, which is useful if you're putting on a record or CD. The *Datel* takes either 8 separate short samples or one long one.

Despite the fact that it has been around the office and used by various members of staff for some time, it took us all a long head-scratching session to work out how to make sounds come out of it. Unfortunately the unit is connected via the audio port, so it doesn't work if you're using a monitor with the computer as we were. Therefore, the computer has to be connected to a TV via the RF lead, or an amplifier – and the lead that comes with it is ludicrously short.

Having captured a sample, the user has full editing options, and parts of the sample can be cut out, thrown away or pasted into another part of the sound. As far as I could tell though, once you've started editing, you can't return to the original sound unless you've actually filed it. Another niggle is that the sample edit page is a numbered scale, whereas the waveform and 3D 'sound mountain' display is on a separate page and should really have formed part of the editing screen.

There's a real-time sequencer that's good for trying out ideas, but not really suitable for serious work. Where it comes into it's own is via the MIDI facility. Unfortunately you may have to shell out an extra £24.99 if you don't possess an interface that works with it. It means that you can play it from a MIDI keyboard as you would a bespoke sampler, albeit with limitations on note range, channel, and velocity – you could even run it from a sequencer, a second computer or dedicated music product! Another plus is the real time effects. It uses it's sampling ability to give effects such as Reverb, Echo, Delay, and Ring Modulation. For the home recording buffs this is quite a decent bonus, as anything approaching these effects costs nearly £200 at the very least.

The samples are compatible with Datel's *Comdrum*, which has an editor program to help you convert samples to *Comdrum* format. I think we can call the *Datel* a novel sampler, and one that has very good semi-professional possibilities.

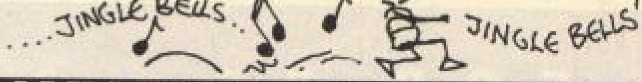



# MIDI

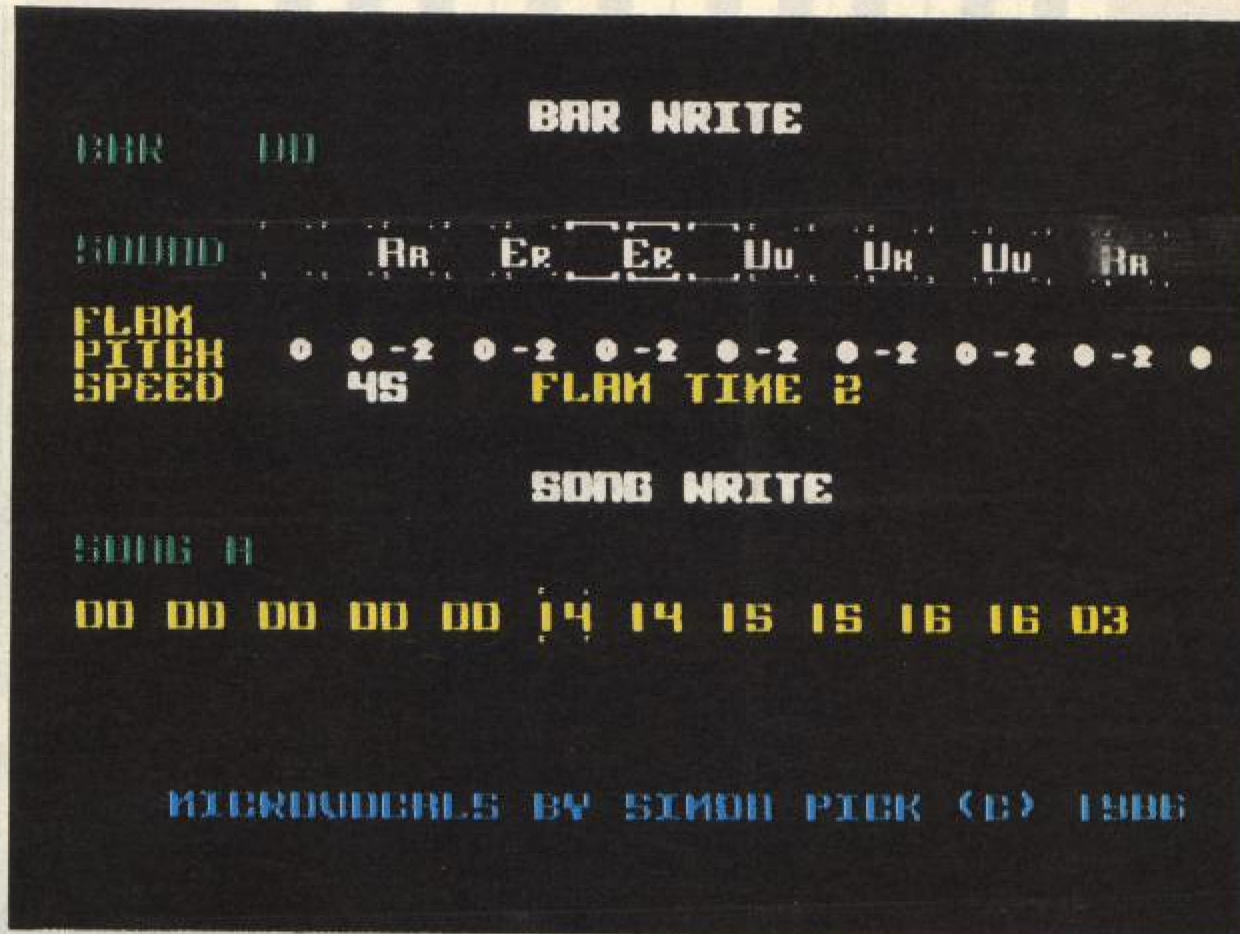
On the subject of MIDI, the 64 is still a good bet for MIDI control packages for sequencing, voice creating and general composition. Although not cheap, there are quite a lot of programs around, the main reason for this being that the 64 is very popular in the States, and because of the much larger market possibilities (¼% of 350 million is better than ¼% of 56 million) there's a lot of American software in this field. If you're seriously thinking about home recording using synthesizers, MIDI and the like, a 64 is a pretty good machine to have. A few programs to look out for – either new or in the second-hand markets – are: *Joreth Music Composer System*, any of the *Sequential* programs, *Seil* programs (reviewed in Issue 1), *C-Lab SuperTracker*, *Sonus Super Sequencer*, and the *Steinberg Pro-16*. If you dig further, you'll find quite a few more programs, but if they have no importer, after-sales service might be a tedious affair.

# DIGITAL DRUMS

In 1986 Supersoft launched a software drum machine for the 64 which contained two kits of real drums sampled digitally, namely *Rhythm King*. The programming facilities are fine – both real and ▶




step-time – with the usual good graphics for editing. Again it works on the 'pattern to song sequence' idea we've seen before. It stores up to 8000 steps on the 64 and 20,000 on the 128, so you have plenty to go at. The major drawback with *Rhythm King* is that the actual samples, although taken via the *Microvox*, are themselves a bit woolly, lack depth and are subject to cavernous built-in reverb which gets in the way if you want a hard up-tempo rhythm track.




## AMS

For my money, the prize for the most universally useful package for a musician goes the the *Advanced Music System*, marketed by Rainbird at £39.95. I wouldn't recommend this program for a beginner as it is very comprehensive and serious. There's not much emphasis on the fun angle, and it takes quite a long time to get to know it – but if you're musically literate and can take the time, it's a very comprehensive package indeed. It has real and step-time sequencing, cut-and-paste facilities for the notation, print-outs with lyrics thrown in, a reasonable MIDI module, full access to the SID chip and a large number of back-up files for voices and sequencing that can be copied from one module of the program to another. The MIDI interface can be obtained from *Datel* for £24.99, who'll even bundle it up with the AMS for the princely sun of £49.99.




## JUST FOR FUN

Music Sales make their contribution to the silly season with *Popular Classics*, a sort of sing-a-long-a-Brahms-and-Liszt. The program has 12 pre-programmed classics, with well arranged accompaniments. The user plays along, following the pointing finger along the displayed keyboard on screen. It does help to have the keyboard overlay – when I tried without one, jeers, boos, and catcalls resulted from the office. If you're wonderfully proficient you can choose to have the program play the full version minus the melody – you merely read it from the book and play along. Playback tempo can be adjusted to your competence. It is MIDI interfacable via a 'suitable' MIDI interface (at this the manual is not a lot of help). If this is as per the manual, a MIDI performance should be quite spectacular. I don't see it as a teaching program or as a particular fun utility, but you might impress someone with your classical prowess, and you can always use the keyboard for just playing.

## GOING CHEAP

Now we're down to the cheapies. All three are from Firebird, and (in reverse order of brilliance) are: *Ubik's Music*, *Microrhythm*, and *Microrhythm Plus*.

*Ubik's Music* is really more of a sound creating utility. It gives very comprehensive control over the SID chip and incorporates a sequencer as well. It was covered by myself in Issue 31 and is best used for programming your own tunes into games – but is well worth £2.99.

*Microrhythm* and *Microrhythm Plus* are absolutely stunning! *Microrhythm* was issued first and reviewed back in Issue 20. It consists of excellent digital samples coded up and sequenced from a very simple and easy on-screen display. As usual, sequenced patterns can be chained together to form songs, and the files can cope with four songs at a time. The drum sounds are very impressive, and each beat can be tuned up or down in pitch. A 'flam' facility lets you double up on each stoke, and you can adjust the gap between the stroke and its repeat. At any time you can check the sounds without entering them into memory, and programming is done by just hitting the keys in time to the metronome click. Bars can be copied, lengthened and shortened. In short, a knock-out drum kit for only £1.99!

*Microrhythm Plus* goes four stages further by having four new sets of voices to go at, and each one is a complete program in itself – all on the one tape. On the tape are: Microlatin, with latin american instruments; Microdisco, with harder electro drums; Microvocal, with voice samples which, thanks to the tuning facility, are remarkable, and Microtune, which has a bass guitar as well as drums, so that a bass line can be put in. Again it is available at the very silly price of £1.99.

Both these programs are monophonic – that is they can only play one drum or note at any one time – but with careful programming you won't notice that. If the author, Simon Pick, could write a kit editor and tape synchronization program he would sell many more. This would mean that you could combine you favourite parts of the sound files, and then by using a sync pulse to a multi-track tape machine you could layer sequences on the multi-track and effectively turn it into a complete sequencer, the Commodore playing back in time to the sync pulse recorded on the one track. With a bit of ingenuity, samples of other instruments could be included to make it a complete musical sequencer working from tunable samples.

Well that s about it. Doubtless some bright spark will write and tell me that I've missed something out but, we can't all be perfect. Have a safe Christmas and see ya sometime in 1988.

**Jon Bates**

# BECOME A REAL HE-MAN WITH £200 WEIGHT TRAINING GEAR



ZZAP! COMP

Gremlin Graphics are soon to release a computer game version of the new *Masters of the Universe* film, which stars Dolph Lundgren as He-Man.

If you'd like to emulate the tall, blonde muscle man, Gremlin have the goods for you – they've decided to celebrate their latest blockbuster with an incredible prize of £200 worth of weight training equipment, including a barbell, dumbells, training bench, and enough weights to sink a battleship!

To take possession of this mighty prize, you must study the pictures of He-Man below and spot the differences made to the picture on the right. Circle the changes and mail it to: **HE-MAN PUMPING IRON COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB,** to arrive no later than the 14th of January 1988.

The first correct entry drawn from a bag will be awarded the weight training equipment, and the next 50 will receive a specially made commemorative T-shirt and a copy of the game.

Note: the competition is only open to puny wimps like Dan Gilbert. Real He-Men need not enter.

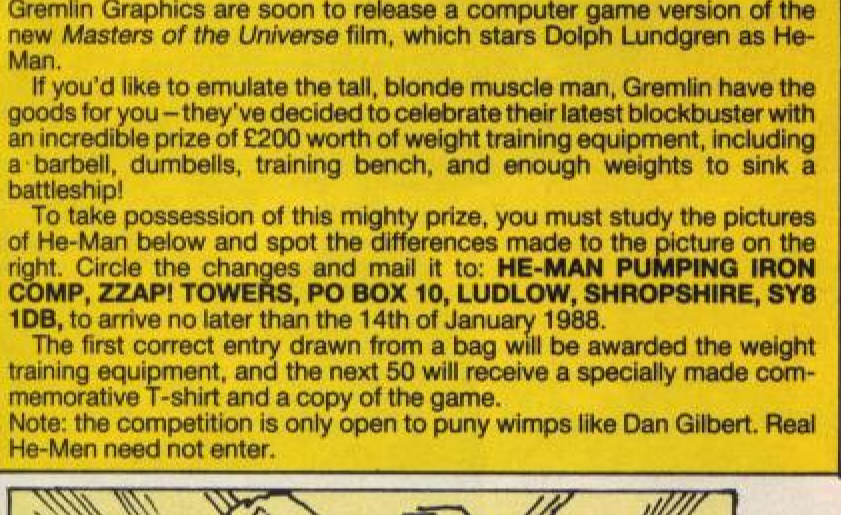
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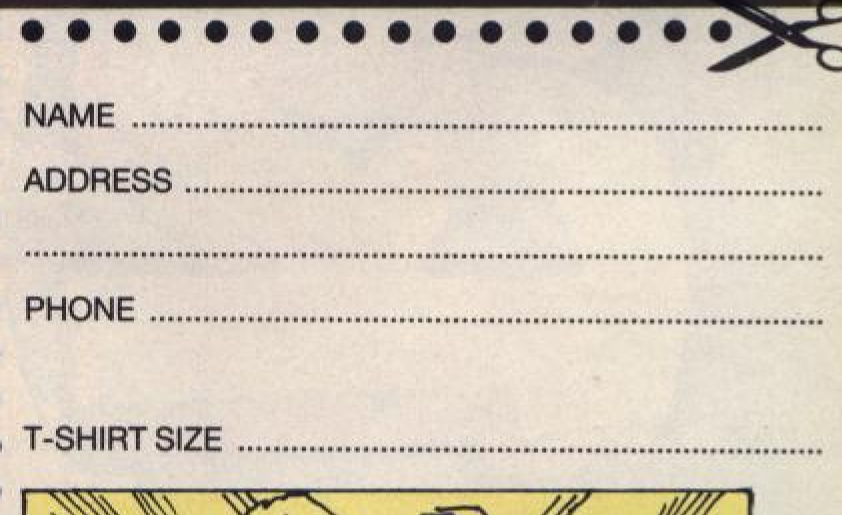
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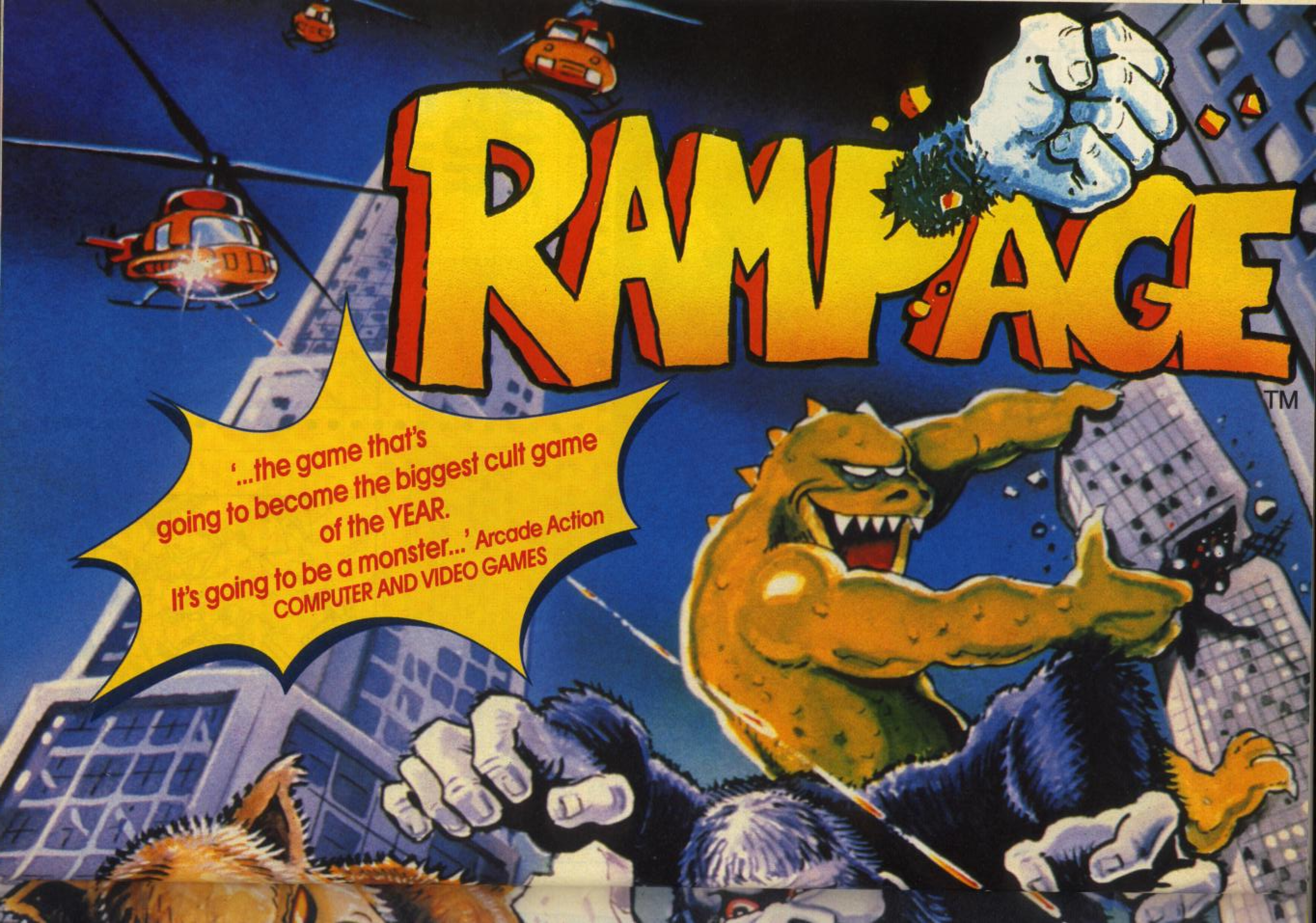
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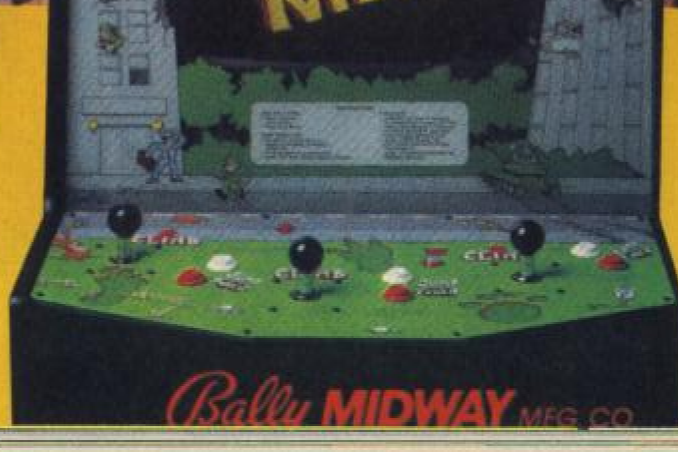
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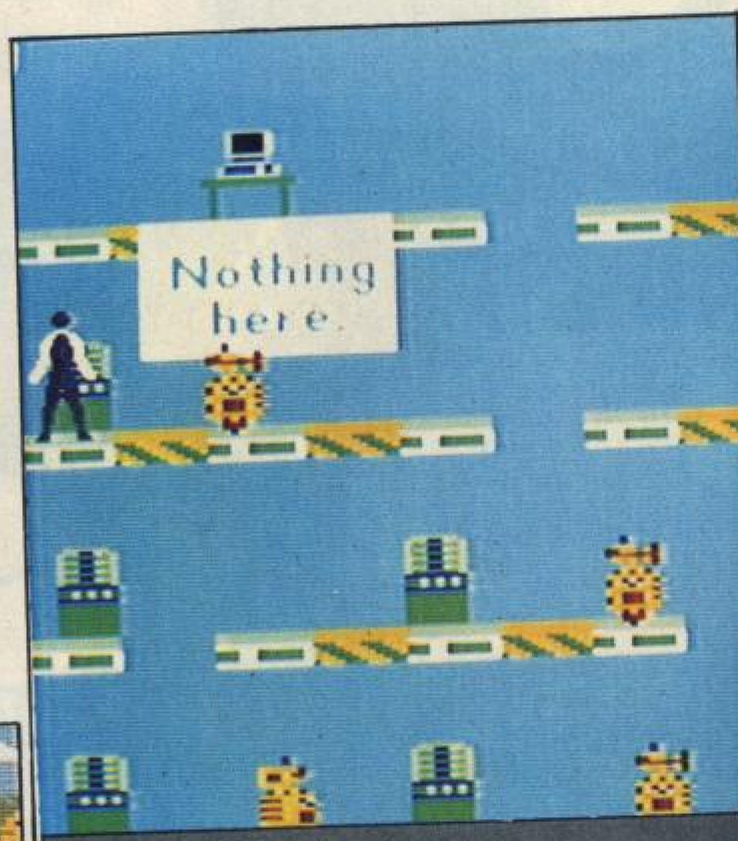
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### WINTER GOLD

A fabulous compilation that offers five top games: *Gauntlet*, a Sizzling conversion of the classic arcade game; *Ace of Aces*, an excellent combat simulation; *Winter Games*, the third in the *Games* series; *Leaderboard*, a Gold Medal golfing simulation, and *Infiltrator*, a Sizzling three-part combat game.




### EPYX EPICS

Three classic Epyx games: *Impossible Mission*, *Pitstop II* and *Summer Games*, and the bizarre *Breakdance* thrown in for good measure. The split screen one or two player *Pitstop II* is one of the best racing games of all time, and *Summer Games* is the Father of the ever growing *Games* family. *Impossible Mission* is an all- time classic, and arguably the best computer game ever written!

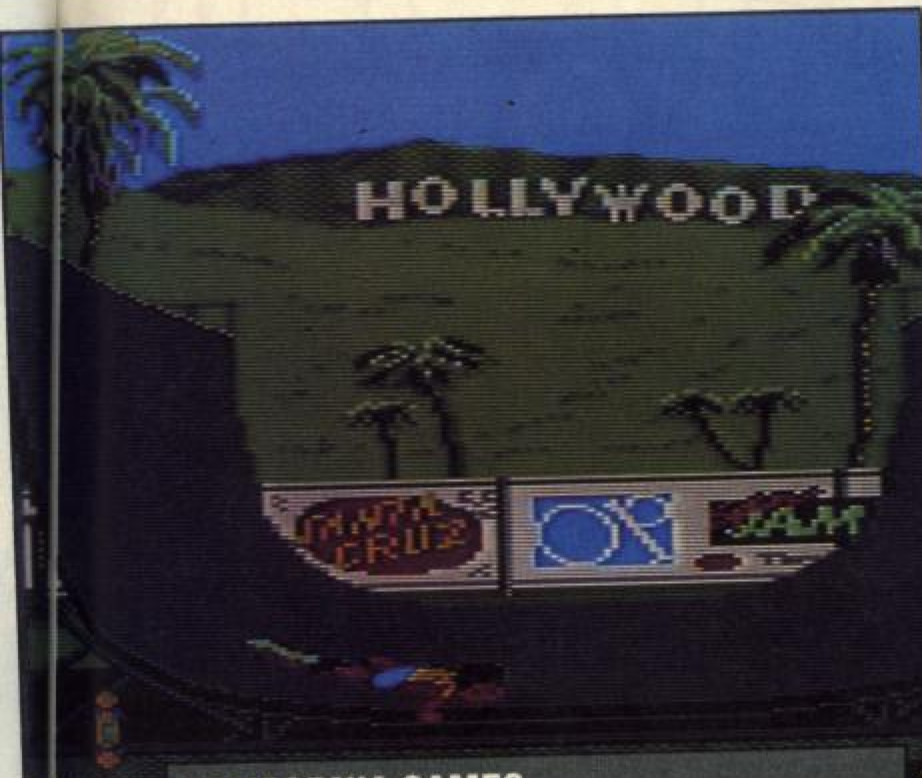


### WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

The third in the *Leaderboard* trilogy, and definitely the best. Play three top courses (St Andrews, Champions Cypress Creek and Doral Country Club) and use all your golfing skills to negotiate the specially designed Gauntlet Country Club without dropping a shot.
"*The* complete golfing simulation."
**Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! 64 July 1987**



# A YEAR'S
# ON TO




**CALIFORNIA GAMES**

Surely the greatest sports simulation yet! Six whacky sports from California: surfing, half pipe skateboarding, flying disk; roller skating, BMX bike racing and foot bag, all in one fun-filled package.

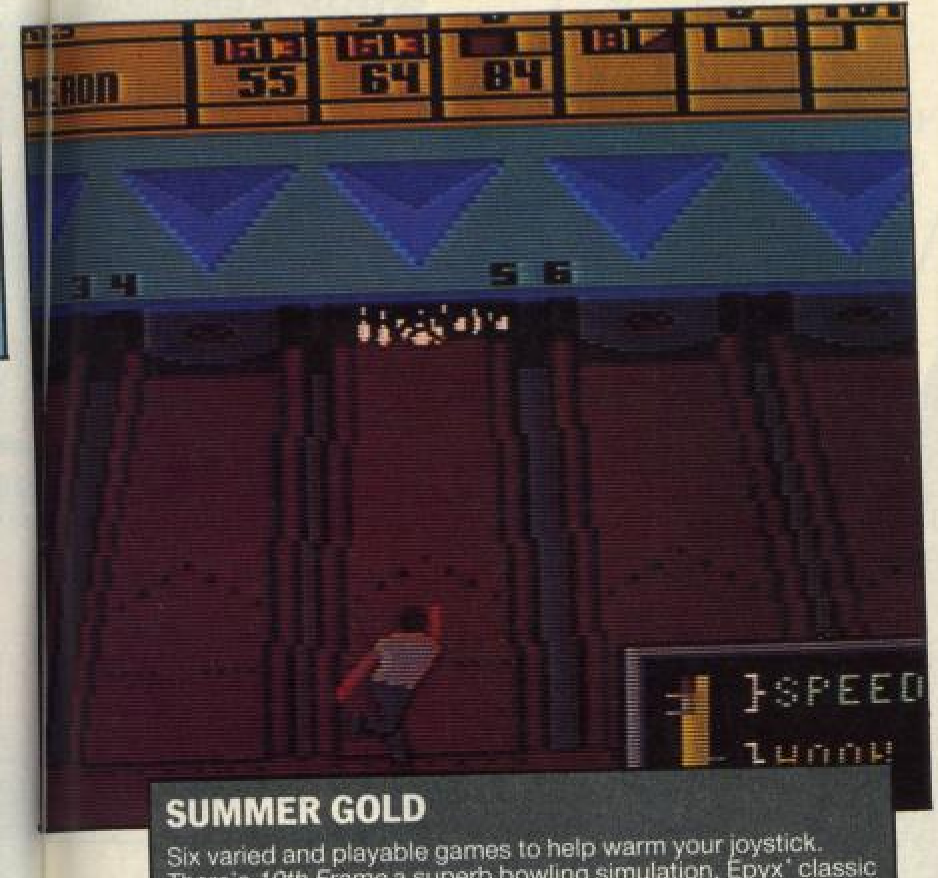
"*California Games* is quite simply the apex of computer sports gaming at the present time."
**Julian Rignall, ZZAP! 64 September 1987**



**SOLOMON'S KEY**

A fabulous puzzle/platform game from the arcades. Guide an explorer through 20 hazard-filled levels in search of fame and fortune.

"A subtle and perplexing game of logic and reflexes."
**Julian Rignall, ZZAP! 64 November 1987**



**SUMMER GOLD**

Six varied and playable games to help warm your joystick. There's *10th Frame* a superb bowling simulation, Epyx' classic *Impossible Mission*, *Dambusters*, a wartime combat simulation, *Beach Head II* a brilliant four-part arcade game, *Rebel Planet*, an illustrated text adventure and Bruce Lee a great martial arts arcade adventure.

## ZZAP! SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

**I would like to take out a 12 month subscription to ZZAP! 64 magazine and receive my free US Gold game. I enclose a cheque/postal order (no cash, please) for £18, made payable to Newsfield Ltd**

Please note, if you're already a subscriber and your subscription has just ended, or if it is within two issues of running out, you may renew using this form (quote your subscriber number please), but DON'T FORGET TO SAY WHICH ISSUE YOU WISH THE NEW SUBSCRIPTION TO RUN FROM!

Those who want to start their subscription with ZZAP! Issue 34 must send their orders to reach us before 23 December (and send early to avoid possible Christmas delays).

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ZAP COMP

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# A WEEKEND FOR THREE IN HOLLAND

## COURTESY OF VIRGIN GAMES

## PLUS £150 SPENDING MONEY!




A QUESTION OF

**SCRUPLES**

You may have noticed the TV advertisements for *Scruples* (the game of moral dilemmas). Well, Virgin Games have just obtained the rights to release a computer version.

To commemorate, Virgin have on offer a weekend for three people in Amsterdam. You'll spend two nights in a top class hotel, with a continental breakfast each morning. However, meals during the day have to be provided by yourself, so each person will be given £50 spending money to blow in restaurants and cafés along the canals of Holland's finest.

To treat yourself (and two friends) to this trip of a lifetime, you must answer the morally questioning puzzlers below, in as humourous and imaginative a way as possible:

1. Your friend has 6,000 pirate games. He knows you disapprove, and therefore won't lend you any. What would you do?
2. What would you do if an an ST and an Amiga owner simultaneously started telling you how wonderful their machines are?
3. Just when you're about to clock 1,000,000 points on *The Game With No Pause Mode*, an onlooking friend begins to turn green. What do you do?
4. Your friend's just broken your 64, and offers his Spectrum as compensation. What do you do?
5. You've awakened to find that you've been turned into a roll of toilet paper by a wicked witch. What do you do?

OK? When you've got some humorous answers, jot them down on the back of a postcard or envelope, with your name, address and phone number, and send it to: **INSCRUTABLE SCRUPLES COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than January the 14th, 1988.

The overall winner gets to go Dutch, and will also receive a copy of both the board game and Virgin's computer *Scruples*. 10 first runners-up will get the board game and computer version, and 40 second runners-up will take possession of the computer game alone. Right. There's lots of prizes on offer, so get those entries rolling in!

Note: Exact date of holiday is subject to tour operator's availability.

# THE SCORELORD'S H

**ALIENS (Electric Dreams)**
420,850 Tony Jones, Aberchirder, Aberdeen
143,500 Paresh Solanki, Forest Gate, London
126,500 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

**ALLEYKAT (Hewson)**
16,298,350 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark
14,582,700 Jean-Claude Zeh, Hoenheim, France
9,334,400 Richard Hudson, Copmanthorpe, York

**ANTIRIAD (Palace Software)**
Completed In . . .
3:06 M Gooday, Bishop's Stortford, Herts
3:07 Martin Walsh, Hayes, Middlx
3:12 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks

**ARKANOID (Imagine)**
1,378,040 Falco, Cleethorpes, S Humberside
1,262,190 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
1,173,170 Stephen Boyce, Harrogate, N Yorks

**ARMOURDILLO (Code Masters)**
45,000 Rainer Umbach, 3501 Espenaal, W Germany
40,600 Paul Griffiths, LLandudno, Wales
29,300 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex

**AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)**
51,223 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
29,478 Alex Montague-Smith, Trowbridge, Wilts
22,563 Alan Hammerton, Fareham, Hants

**BARBARIAN (Palace Software)**
160,000 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
99,850 Antony Foster, Nuneaton, Warwickshire
99,800 Grant Mundy, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

**BEAMRIDER (Activision)**
1,607,528 David Brownlee, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian
980,420 Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! Towers
642,704 Michael Sung, Peterlee, Co Durham

**BMX SIMULATOR (Codemasters)**
6,285 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
4,900 Richard Hawkins, Woking, Surrey
4,890 Justin Gregory, Longton, Stoke-On-Trent

**BREAKTHRU (US Gold)**
246,000 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
138,050 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex

**BUBBLE BOBBLE (Firebird)**
2,376,570 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorkshire
1,288,210 Simon Evetts, Duxford, Cambs
1,076,430 Marcus Falconer, Duxford, Cambs

**BULLDOG (Gremlin Graphics)**
2,238,200 Gary Footitt, Droylsden, Manchester
2,185,900 Peter Walker, Adelaide, S Australia
1,825,700 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden

**COBRA (Ocean)**
285,900 Philip Stevens, Alfreton, Derbyshire
93,400 Patrick Green, Burnley, Lancs
89,200 Stephen Wildridge, Great Sutton, S Wirral

**COSMIC CAUSEWAY (Gremlin Graphics)**
217,438 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

**CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)**
677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
668,995 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
652,127 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

**DECEPTOR (US Gold)**
27,050 Steven King, Plymouth, Devon
13,510 Trenoy Gaetan, Brussels, Belgium

**DEFENDER OF THE CROWN (Mirrorsoft)**
Completed by:
May 1200 Henrik Sylow, Arhus, Denmark
November 1200 Harro Willemsen, Numansdorp, The Netherlands
November 1200 Guy Guilding, Slough, Berks

**DELTA (Thalamus)**
1,992,579 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
1,767,200 Richard Ryan, Sutton Coldfiled, W Mids
1,258,430 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs

**DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)**
63,997 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
36,642 Simon Cole's Mum, Chelmsford, Essex
33,750 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

**DUET (Elite)**
256,640 Jap, Ettingshall Park, Wolverhampton
174,290 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
168,170 Fu Sang Li, Crewe, Cheshire

**ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)**
104,800 Leon White, Consett, Co Durham
92,742 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
88,588 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs

**EXPRESS RAIDER (US Gold)**
68,450 Gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks
60,600 Dean Ferguson, Gillingham, Kent
51,200 Sanjam Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

**THE EQUALISER (The Power House)**
21,850 Stephen Boyce, Harrogate, N Yorks
20,620 Dean Stinton, Botley, Southampton
14,850 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks

**FIRELORD (Hewson)**
145,205 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
143,160 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs
142,610 Jap, Ettingshall Park, Wolverhampton

**FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)**
835,640 Darren Cole, Chingford, London
664,960 Kristian Bruun, Copenhagen, Denmark
527,290 Johnny Larsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

**FIST II (Melbourne House)**
1,753,000 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Northants
1,560,800 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham

**GAME OVER (Imagine)**
99,400 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales
54,250 Esa Paulasto, 20510 Turku, Finland

**GAUNTLET: DEEPER DUNGEONS (US Gold)**
Merlin The Wizard
8,787,195 Asher Rashid, Thornaby, Cleveland
6,846,411 Lee Andrews, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
4,350,297 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Thor The Warrior
9,835,036 Lee Andrews, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
4,678,932 David Taylor, Alvington, Glos
3,974,521 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Questor the Elf
8,746,238 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
6,531,612 Edward O'Donnell, Hillingdon, Middx
2,497,341 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Thyra the Valkyrie
6,416,327 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
2,411,819 Lee Andrews, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
818,692 Paul Hollington, Hullbridge, Essex

**GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS (Elite)**
920,800 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
531,890 Christian Major, Norwich, Norfolk
456,060 Chris Goodswen, Norwich, Norfolk

**GUNSHIP (Microprose)**
278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgewater, Somerset
271,835 Mark Slavin, Leadgate, Co Durham
265,990 David Nicol, Heworth, York

**HADES NEBULA (Nexus)**
383,200 David Theys, Schilde, Belgium
297,997 Jane Gallaway, London
237,467 Mike Green, London

**HEAD OVER HEELS (Ocean)**
89,300 Iain Thomson, Kilmaurs, Scotland
88,620 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
88,140 Richard Lunn, Leeds, W Yorks

**HERO (Firebird)**
297,845 Michael Palmer, Maidstone, Kent
197,852 Lawson Davies, Pencoed, S Wales
177,762 Patrick Lammers, 1400 Nivelles, Belgium

**I, BALL (Firebird)**
104,040 Marc Johnson, Broughton, Chester
52,389 Niel Rumbold, Bottesford, Notts
52,040 Matthew Sears, Worcester

**INTERNATIONAL KARATE+ (System 3)**
125,400 Dan Gilbert, ZZAP! Towers

**INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)**
2,548,600 Lee Andrews, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
2,186,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
1,637,600 Peter Reilly, Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk

**IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)**
599,760 George Bray, Armthorpe, Doncaster
349,520 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
204,390 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx

**JAILBREAK (Konami)**
356,500 C Mitchell, Petersfield, Hants
195,500 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
102,500 Malcolm Redfern, Preston, Lancs

**JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)**
518,550 G Meeusen, 2230 Schilde, Belgium
303,990 J Gheorghisor (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
250,350 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear

**KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)**
11,700 Craig Bent, Failsworth, Manchester
6,300 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London
6,300 Martin Walsh, Hayes, Middlx

**KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)**
26,292,790 Janice Nicolle, CICC, Gurnsey
21,184,770 Michael Eikmans, The Netherlands
12,740,800 Dave & Brett Warburton, Cheshire

**LEADERBOARD: EXECUTIVE EDITION (US Gold/Access)**
NOVICE
-26 Graham Kane, Tividale, W Mids
-25 David Dunn, Shaftesbury, Dorset
-23 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts

AMATEUR
-19 G McKenzie, E Lothian, Scotland
-19 G Sinclair, Cornwall

PROFESSIONAL
-34 Paul Wootten, Woking, Surrey
-30 Steve Jones, North End, Portsmouth
-18 Stewart Rogers, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

**LIGHTFORCE (FTL)**
3,769,200 J Hurley, Toothill, Swindon
3,584,950 Lee Andrews, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
3,239,250 Richard Burgman, Seaford, Essex

**MARIO BROTHERS (Ocean)**
449,380 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
255,800 Jim Gallikas, Athens, Greece
252,620 Ozz, New Eltham, London

**MEGA APOCALYPSE (Martech)**
112,600 David Emmins, Stratford, London
107,140 Robin Strickland, London E1
104,780 Asheesh Sirduw, London N8

**METROCROSS (US Gold)**
1,116,200 Matthew Sears, Worcester
362,850 Andrew Holmes, Bottesford, Notts
311,700 Louis Farnham, Twickenham, Middlesex

**MILK RACE (Mastertronic)**
7,965 Kristian Fulfitt, Estover, Plymouth
7,964 Chris Raynham, Belper, Derby
7,949 Shaun Gore, King's Lynn, Norfolk

**MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Databyte)**
1,127,500 W Drew, Brisbane, Australia
801,800 Jennifer Yates, Bolton, Lancs
412,450 Adam Trewella, Stapleton, Bristol

**MUTANTS (Ocean)**
208,568,830 Colin Greenaway, Ballysillan Rd, Belfast
66,209,750 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
51,644,500 Adie Bonner, Southbourne

**NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)**
37,460 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts
14,290 Andrew Scully, Brincliffe, Sheffield
12,770 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Mid Glam



# GH SCORING HEROES

**NINJA MASTER (Mastertronic)**
485,840 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
198,880 Robert Futter, Downham Market, Norfolk
196,315 Michael Pihl, Kumla, Sweden

**NOMAD (Ocean)**
5,264 John Gheorghisor, (Runsoft), Australia
4,065 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
3,885 Paul Tudor, Stourbridge, Pedmore

**OINK (CRL)**
465,147 Jamie Paton, Downfield, Dundee

**OLLI AND LISSA (Firebird)**
19,820 Lee Barker, Northwich, Cheshire
14,898 Stuart Scattergood, Address not included
13,715 Henderik Engelsman, Maassluis, Holland

**PANTHER (Mastertronic)**
327,740 Eddie Vallar, Sydney, Australia
250,900 Liam Chivers, Battenhall, Worcs
215,500 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey

**PAPERBOY (Elite)**
486,352 Edward O'Donnell, Hillingdon, Middlx
390,995 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
301,400 Mark Rolf, Kettering, Northants

**PARADROID PLUS (Hewson)**
112,850 Robert Paul Smith, Edmunton, London
86,500 Brian Yeo, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
63,200 Adam Beabies, Tarbolton, Ayrshire

**PARALLAX (Ocean)**
106,850 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey
89,300 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
78,400 Adam Pracy, Newton Flotman, Norwich

**PARK PATROL (Firebird)**
999,990 Greg Murphy, Moreton, Wirral
996,130 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
995,610 Jonathan Edge, Waverton, Cheshire

**POD (Mastertronic)**
2,178,690 Grahame Rae, Bo'ness, Scotland
1,468,440 Karsten Toksvig, 8832 SKAIS, Denmark
1,082,440 Matthew Penn, Ormskirk, Lancashire

**PROHIBITION (Infogrames)**
$18,280 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
$8,370 Andy Gaskell, Bootle, Merseyside

**QUEDEX (Thalamus)**
567 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hamps
461 Mark Price, Pennard, Swansea

**QUARTET (Activision)**
2,874,500 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex
910,900 Les Ozouets, St Peter Port, Guernsey
440,300 Spencer Matthews, Feltham, Middx

**RANARAMA (Hewson)**
4,828,400 Richard Leadbetter, Witham, Essex
1,822,200 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
1,615,000 Steve Dawn, Radford, Nottingham

**RE-BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)**
11,250,073 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
2,470,584 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
1,438,372 Robin Strickland, London E1

**RIVER RAID (Firebird)**
310,710 Mike Green, London
309,395 Peter Garnett, Charlot, Manchester
259,235 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

**ROAD RUNNER (US Gold)**
766,580 Glenn Black, Gainsborough, Lincs
285,000 Andrew Dallyn, Braunton, Devon
282,860 Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks

**ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)**
7,335,335 Janice Nicolle, CICC, Gurnsey
3,125,100 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham
2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothers, Fife

**SABOTEUR (Durell)**
£2,789,600 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks
£2,115,200 Per Jorner, Orebro, Sweden
£2,038,200 Linus Jorner, Orebro, Sweden

**SANXION (Thalamus)**
1,006,466 Steven Malpass, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
953,980 Richard Ryan, Sutton Coldfield, W Mids
784,390 Stephen Gandy, Halesowen, W Mids

**SCOOBY DOO (Elite)**
304,700 Robert Wakefield, Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent
275,800 Michael Eley, Wimborne, Dorset
248,600 Sean McDonagh, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear

**SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)**
128,420 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
73,670 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
46,150 Jim Gallikas, Athens, Greece

**SHOCKWAY RIDER (FTL)**
1,524,798 Matthew Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby
291,000 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
88,350 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

**SILENT SERVICE (US Gold/Microprose)**
(TONS SUNK)
1,032,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
910,100 Karsten Tokisuig, Drosselvej 6, Denmark
563,100 Steven Hall, Croughton, N Hants

**SKATE ROCK (Bubble Bus)**
326,380 Brian Hambley, Prescot, Merseyside
288,430 Justin Cole, Huddersfield, W Yorks
239,020 Sean Walker, (Runsoft), Australia

**SKY RUNNER (Cascade)**
$669,700 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
$585,700 Paresh Solanki, Forest Gate, London
$321,250 Stuart Scattergood, Deeside, Clwyd

**SKOOL DAZE (Micromega)**
126,910 Anthony Duiker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
120,780 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
104,340 Scott Moore, Fixby, Huddersfield

**SLAMBALL (Americana)**
7,462,660 Carleton Shaw, London, N10
5,801,720 C Harbinson, Rumney, Cardiff
5,504,870 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness

**SLAP FIGHT (Imagine)**
586,000 Matthew Viveash, Chinnor, Oxon
423,850 Mattias Lukinen, 13900 Wermdo, Sweden
214,550 Gareth Williams, Swansea, W Glamorgan

**SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)**
683,500 Keith Lenton, Halesowen, W Mids
680,400 Mrs L Hayden, London E16
670,200 Daniel Fisher, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

**STAR PAWS (Software Projects)**
446,570 Shaun Gore, King's Lynn, Norfolk
441,112 David Booth, Riddings, Derbys
427,014 Justin Allen, Edgeware, Middx

**STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)**
287,763 Nigel Froud, Godalming, Surrey
287,140 Ove Knudseu, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

**SUPER CYCLE (US Gold/Epyx)**
342,650 Bryan Chamberlain, Norwich, Norfolk
328,860 Leigh O'Connell, Murrumbeena, Australia
320,160 A Verhaeghe, Bletchley, Bucks

**SUPERSPRINT (US Gold)**
130,600 Glenn Black, Gainsborough, Lincs

**TENTH FRAME (US Gold/Access)**
AMATEUR
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
290 David Riddick, Ilkeston, Derby
290 Les Stahl, Queensland, Australia
PROFESSIONAL
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
233 Neil Taylor, Bracknell, Berks
214 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

**TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)**
402,100 Michael Dunajew, Adelaide, Australia
371,800 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
361,700 Justin Gregory, Longton, Stoke-On-Trent

**THING BOUNCES BACK (Gremlin Graphics)**
1,800,000 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
1,649,973 Mick Kinsman, New Malden, Surrey
1,338,108 Steve Bennett, Prestatyn, Clwyd

**THRUST (Firebird)**
5,755,240 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
4,182,050 Arlo Swinson, Doncaster, S Yorks

**THUNDERBOLT (Codemasters)**
546,290 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
164,450 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex

**TOY BIZARRE (Activision)**
223,420 J D Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk
144,700 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
102,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

**TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)**
1,286,219 Niel Rumbold, Bottesford, Notts
1,123,350 Jason Cooper, Wednesbury, W Mids
1,120,040 Henry Rawlinson, Salisbury, Wilts

**URIDIUM PLUS (Hewson)**
478,025 Neville Lewis, Port Talbot, S Wales
244,505 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark
221,290 Stephen Paget, Uckfield, Sussex

**VIDEO MEANIES (Mastertronic)**
250,541 Stuart Scattergood, Clwyd, N Wales
250,381 Michael Palmer, Maidstone, Kent
135,159 Sean McMenamin, Clarkston, Glasgow

**VOIDRUNNER (Mastertronic)**
6,492,260 Richard Hawkins, Woking, Surrey
6,253,825 Grant Bannister, Luton, Beds
5,997,326 D Rice, Southgate, London

**WARHAWK (Firebird)**
6,830,786 Justin Gregory, Longton, Stoke-On-Trent
6,229,526 Glenn Haworth, Swallow, Lincs
4,459,784 Hamish Patel, Northolt, Middlesex

**WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)**
306,750 Stephen Raggett, Westbourne Pk, London
210,000 Jon Cullen, Hillgate, Stockport
160,750 Robert Jagger, Brighouse, W Yorks

**WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)**
242,645 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
154,140 Craig Wills, Taunton, Somerset
152,735 Steven Medcraft, Rayleigh, Essex

**WONDER BOY (Activision)**
353,160 Jason Langmead, Vale, Guernsey
347,410 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex
249,240 James Rushworth, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**XEVIOUS (US Gold)**
1,328,540 Colin Greenaway, Ballysillan Rd, Belfast
824,380 Fintan Brady, Virginia, Ireland
412,940 Matthew Ward, Bromley, Kent

**YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)**
4,184,000 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W mids
4,098,200 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
3,554,600 Martin Dawson, Co Armagh, N Ireland

**YIE AR KUNG-FU II (Imagine)**
288,300 Carl Adams, Tooting, London
183,300 Ian Coulter, Leeds
166,100 Steven Bramley, Bromley, Kent

**Z (Rhino)**
701,250 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
671,450 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
576,200 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight

**ZENJI (Firebird)**
23,445 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
21,375 Jason Chippendale, Hall Green, W Mids
19,460 Michael Brown, Northallerton, N Yorks

**ZOLYX (Firebird)**
524,318 Rob Housley, Thamesmead, London
361,725 Ade Walter, Thamesmead, London
295,693 Paul Cropper, Wokingham, Berks

**ZONE RANGER (Firebird)**
20,316 Marc Spence, Middleton, Leeds
14,650 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx
12,904 Mrs Sue McGovern, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

**ZYNAPS (Hewson)**
198,440 Mark Andrews, Netherton, W Mids
162,300 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales
147,800 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark



**Applications to the Scorelord should be made on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, and entries which contain more than three high-scores will not be accepted.**

# 100 ALL-TIME COMPUTER GREATS

## PART ONE

**Mel Croucher's historic encyclopaedia of the people and events that changed the world of computing. Cartoons by Robin Evans.**



### ~ ONE ~

**PREHISTORIC MAN** ***(homo neanderthalis Alansugarum).*** Scholars and historians still insist that the world's first astral computer was Stonehenge. This is not true. Recent analysis of Stone Age cave paintings reveal that long ago visitors from outer space landed on Salisbury Plain to attend the Midsummer Free Festival. Due to an error in the space-time continuum they arrived several thousand years too early, and their giant spacecraft was left parked at what is now known as Stonehenge. This was not a place of primitive worship, but a Druid's car park, and the great stones that we see today are nothing more than a very big wheel clamp.

### ~ TWO ~

**KING TUTENKHAMEN.** The ancient Egyptians attempted to build portable computers near Thebes, because of the abundance of silicon in the sand and to get one over on the Israelites. Hieroglyphics prove they worshipped the same computerised characters that we can recognise today, including cruddy little two-inch tall stick-men supposed to represent real people. Tutenkhamen's lap-tops were not a commercial success due to the fact that his Pyramids, as they were called, took 3,000 slaves and a herd of elephants to shift them.

### ~ THREE ~

**NOAH.** The first real computer programmer was the Lord God Almighty, who invented the binary system. One of His most promising pupils was an Israelite named Noah, whom He instructed to build a double-density data storage system called 'The Ark', and to fill its memory banks with binary animals, two by two. Due to some very poor research, Noah flooded the market. And these are the programs of Noah: and Noah begat a son whose name was Pingpong, and Pingpong begat Invader, and Invader begat Pacman and Pacman begat Frogger, and Frogger begat Donkeykong, and Donkeykong begat Ninja and Ninja went forth and multiplied until the face of the Earth was covered with bleeding Ninjas and there was a wailing and gnashing of teeth. And lo, and even lower, these are the generations of Noah.



### ~ FOUR ~

**PLATO.** The height of the Greek civilisation was achieved with the invention of computerised take-away meals. The Plate-of-kebabs-man, better known as Plato, constructed a small wooden frame in which he fitted a series of metal skewers to hold the cubes of kebab meat, bits of onion and slices of green peppers. He devised an automatic stock control system and cash register, whereby the remaining kebabs were shunted from one end of their rods to the other in strict mathematical order. This machine became known as the 'abacus' because of its inventor's disgusting habit of asking for a kiss with his mouth full.

### ~ FIVE ~

**ARCHIMEDES.** Everyone remembers Archimedes for his famous screw. This consisted of flogging overpriced products named after his nuts. These 'Acorns' were adopted by the Bureaucratic Blather Council of Greece, or BBC, in favour of the cheaper more powerful Sinclariums. The name of Archimedes lives on today, but the great empire of the BBC was swept away by barbarians led by the goddess Maria Whittakallmeclothesoff.



### ~ SIX ~

**CLAVIUS SINCLARIUM.** After the Roman Empire conquered the world (excepting certain parts of Ludlow, where civilisation never happened), they had to think up a new way of counting all of their possessions. Up to this period of history they used an idiotic combination of letters like I,V,X,D,L and M to represent numbers, which was totally useless when it came to reading out the football results, and downright insulting when the Emperor Climacticus was described as having achieved the age of DIX. So they asked their wisest and shortest sage, Clavius Sinclarium, to invent a more civilised system. Sinclarium hit on the idea of the digital computer, in other words he invented counting on your fingers. At a stroke, mathematics, philosophy and the glove industry was transformed throughout the known world (excepting Ludlow, etc) Sinclarium's miniaturised gloves used the 'decimal' system, which was coded in a language known as 'Basic'. Various combinations of fingers represented the following Basic codes: one extended thumb indicated 'can I have a lift on your chariot mate', one finger meant 'I am doing something private to my nostrils, two fingers translated as 'please go away', three fingers stood for 'bless you everyone, my name is the Pope', four fingers was 'thizmuch whiskyan jusalill dropof warrer', and four fingers plus one thumb could mean either 'how do you do' or 'lend us a quid' or 'hi there, I'm Benito Mussolini and this is my salute.' Sinclarium was made a Senator for his achievements, and he was never heard of again.

### ~ SEVEN ~

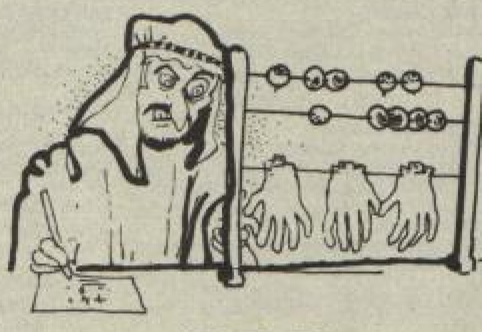
**SAINT PAUL.** Evidence of computerised junk mail has been dated from as early as 86 AD. Fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls have recently been translated as primitive attempts at direct-marketing mail drops, word processed using the Apostle System known as 'Saint Paul'. A typical example reads, 'DEAR CORINTHIANS of 42B Zealot Avenue, you have been specially selected to take part in our great new special offer of instant salvation, with a First Prize of an all expenses paid eternity in the fabulous holiday resort of Heaven. Don't delay, CORINTHIANS, just send back the enclosed coupon, and one of our representatives will call round with a free introductory baptism. Or call FREEPRAY 0800 800, and hear a specially recorded platitude.'

### ~ EIGHT ~

**ETHELRED THE UNREADY.** With the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, hordes of vandals invaded the shores of Ancient Britain, looting, raping and pillaging, thereby inventing Club 18-30 holidays. Several British chieftains tried to combat the invaders by shutting the pubs early, and the celebrated King Arthur used an Ancient British Telecom Merlin system to ruin their communications, but it was Ethelred the Unready who finally defeated the enemy by announcing that all-format versions of *Star Trek* would be available by Christmas 987 AD. The vandals died laughing.

### ~ NINE ~

**VLAD THE IMPALER.** In the Balkans, much progress was made in computer design, especially in the area of integrated circuit design, ergonomic keyboards, logical positivism and axiomatic propositional calculus. All that was missing was a supply of nine and a half volts of direct current. Vlad the Impaler organised an elaborate system of power generation using treadmills, powered by several thousand units of slave labour. Unfortunately Vlad remembered that he was a vandal, and looted, raped and pillaged everyone in sight before anyone had time to plug in the power unit. The harnessing of electricity was thereby delayed for several centuries, and the Dark Ages began.



### ~ TEN ~

**RICHARD THE LIONHEART.** Meanwhile back in England, the peasants were revolting and software consisted of hair shirts. In the absence of the Falklands, privatisation of the Black Death or delivery of *Star Trek* by the year 1187, Richard the Lionheart decided to invent the Crusades. It seems that the sons of Allah had gotten way ahead in digital computers, and their salesmen had already monopolised the Holy Land, half of Spain and certain parts of Ludlow, so huge armies were raised, lowered and catapulted across the Channel towards Jerusalem. The first Crusade was a disaster, with the hapless Christians armed only with Sinclarium Basic, whereas the Arabs were equipped with the latest Machine Code versions of the abacus. This was due to the severe punishments doled out under Islamic law for the crimes of using Basic and looking up men's skirts. The former resulted in the cutting off of one hand, the latter resulted in the plucking out of one eye. Never a culture to waste its resources, the Arabs had the most advanced computers in the world consisting of serial interfaces of severed hands and skewered eyes. Thus was the video digitiser invented.

### ~ ELEVEN ~

**BLONDIN.** Who has not marvelled at the faithful minstrel Blondin, wandering hither and thither, high and low or unable to score at all, in search of his master Richard the Lionheart? But how many people are aware that he made his fabled journey of loyalty all the way from Wapping to Constantinople on a bicycle. It was during this agonising trip (the pneumatic tyre and the bicycle saddle were not invented until the nineteenth century) that Blondin learned from the simple inhabitants of the Kingdom of Anorexia something that we all take for granted today. This revelation was that the first ever computer used by mankind, womankind, and people like Bonnie Langford was the Moon! How obvious it seems in hindsight. But it was not until Blondin the cycling minstrel brought the news back to the Western world that we understood the vital importance of the Moon's 29-day monthly phase; the reason that there is a rush for razor blades once a month when werewolves need to shave their palms, the careful timing of when your paycheques fail to equal the amount demanded by Access, and the irritability of fertile women. This phenomenon is now known as the Minstrel Cycle.

## ~ TWELVE ~

**GALILLEO.** The news of the Moon being the only working computer available in Christendom was rushed to the Vatican, and the Holy Father got his top scientists on the job. The Bishop of Ireland decreed that his flock must get to the moon in order to decode it, but they ran out of scaffolding. The King Of France harnessed several million frogs, together, but failed in his attempt to jump aboard the spacecraft. Thus it was left to a local boffin named Galilleo to bring the Moon to Earth. He managed this by inventing the telescope, and was able to copy out all of the coded program that was visible. The computer press raved about this incredible achievement, and from that day to this, everyone involved with computer programming has been officially recognised as a raving loony.

## ~ THIRTEEN ~

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.** Britain can be rightly proud of William Shakespeare, who wrote most of his limericks using the first ever word processor. This was a mature male goat, of Spanish extraction, named Loco-script, which roughly translated means 'my freelance writers are insane.' Shakespeare would sit at his roughly-hewn escritoire, placing the goat's hindquarters near his face, having first ensured that the goat had access to a great pile of dictionaries, manuscripts and newspapers of the day. Loco-script would then eat the words and process them via its Ram-pack. All Shakespeare had to do was to rearrange the droppings into well known phrases, sayings, poems and plays. Many of these classics are recognised as the world's greatest ever word-processed drama, and we tend to forget some of the original titles such as *Two Gentlemen Of Angora, The Taming Of The Goat, Ram And Juliet, The Merry Nannies Of Windsor*, and *A Midsummer Night's Butt.*

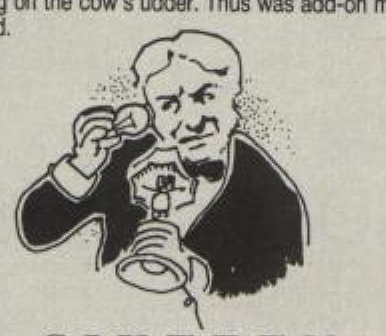


## ~ FOURTEEN ~

**SIR ISAAC NEWTON.** The famous physicist and mathematician Isaac Newton was sitting under a tree one Tuesday evening in 1697, waiting for gravity to be invented. Up until this time there was no such thing as gravity, and nobody took a blind bit of notice if piles of fruit suddenly floated off into space, or the family cat went for a walk on the ceiling. The story of an Apple computer falling on Newton's head is well documented, but he found it totally useless because of the QWERTY keyboard. In 1697 people still thought the alphabet ran ABCDEF.

## ~ FIFTEEN ~

**DR EDWARD JENNER.** The great leap forward to digital computing took place in the Eighteenth Century, while Jenner was seeking a cure for smallpox. He was sitting under a cow, doing Isaac Newton imitations and idly calculating on a primitive rubber glove when he ran out of fingers to count on. With a flash of genius, Jenner began counting on the cow's udder. Thus was add-on memory invented.



## ~ SIXTEEN ~

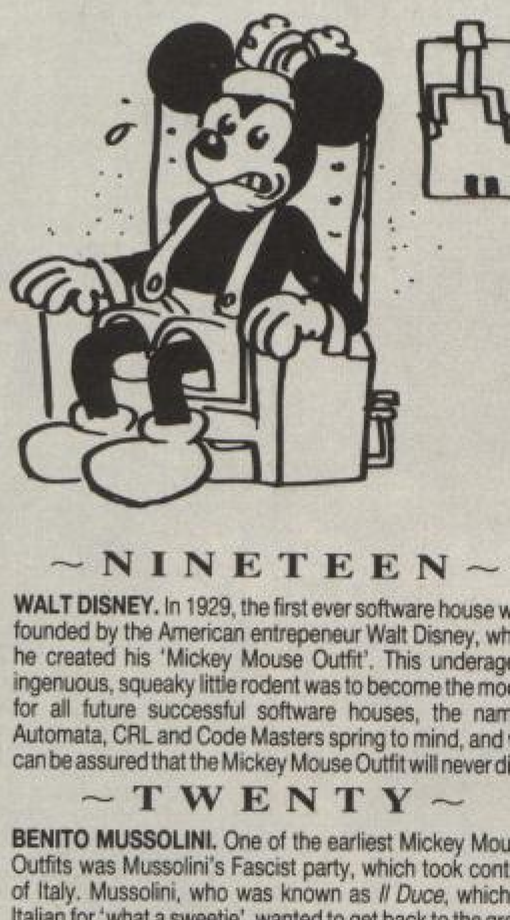
**THOMAS EDISON.** Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1872, Thomas Alvar Edison was hailed as the Electric Lights Wizard. This annoyed Mrs Edison very much, especially when computer journalists came up and started flicking her about the chest, under the impression that she was the Electric Lights Witch. (this joke is the copyright of Robin Evans, but what the hell: he's getting paid for the cartoons). Tuesday evening, after tea and compulsory prayers, Thomas called Mrs Edison into his laboratory to witness the first practical demonstration of his electrical modem. What a moment that must have been. Edison, nervous, sweating, chopped herring and last night's cocaine all down his waistcoat, picking up that light bulb, connecting the red cable to the positive terminal of his accumulator the black cable to the negative terminal of his accumulator, throwing the little lever marked 'lever' and closing his eyes in anticipation. Then he raises the light bulb to his ear and says, 'Hello?'

## ~ SEVENTEEN ~

**IGOR STRAVINSKY.** At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the great Russian composer Stravinsky wrote the first computer musical comedy. He called it *The Firebird* and by the 1980s *Firebird* had evolved from comedy to farce. As electronic synthesizers were somewhat primitive in 1913, Stravinsky used clockwork, driven by a series of right-handed springs. His famous *Right Of Spring* caused a sensation, not equalled since Richard Wagner wrote the *Ring Cycle*, which as we all know was a forerunner of the bike bell on the Sinclair C5.

## ~ EIGHTEEN ~

**ALBERT EINSTEIN.** Probably the greatest thinker of modern times, Albert Einstein cracked the greatest computing problem ever with his simple equation $E=MC^2$. (Editorial control is only half as effective as Mel Croucher's lunchtime drinking.) Today, one of the world's finest micros is named after him, although why anyone would want to call a computer 'Albert' beats me.



## ~ NINETEEN ~

**WALT DISNEY.** In 1929, the first ever software house was founded by the American entrepeneur Walt Disney, when he created his 'Mickey Mouse Outfit'. This underaged, ingenuous, squeaky little rodent was to become the model for all future successful software houses, the names Automata, CRL and Code Masters spring to mind, and we can be assured that the Mickey Mouse Outfit will never die.

## ~ TWENTY ~

**BENITO MUSSOLINI.** One of the earliest Mickey Mouse Outfits was Mussolini's Fascist party, which took control of Italy. Mussolini, who was known as *Il Duce*, which is Italian for 'what a sweetie', wanted to get back to the great days of computing in the Roman Empire, and was a follower of the Sinclarium digital system. Due to a typographical error, he failed to invent the digital computer, but succeeded in perfecting the digital commuter by getting the trains to run on time.

## ~ TWENTY ONE ~

**SIR ALEXANDER FLEMING.** Those were dark days in Britain. The General Strike, the Great Depression, looming War in Europe, the birth of Benny Hill, and the terrible smogs and flu epidemics that decimated our population. On the computing front, the only bright spot on the horizon was the discovery of a fungus growing on a slice of Hovis, by Sir Alexander Fleming, the Scottish principal accordion player with the Jimmi Shand Experience. Hedging his bets between Adolf Hitler's Nazis and Joe Stalin's Communists, he recorded *Heil Joe* in 1939 on the same day that he found a use for his new wonderdrug. While playing a gig at The Old Vic, Sir Alexander Fleming realised that if you shoved 20 grammes of his invention up your nose, it would cure influenza by killing the user with frustration. That is why he called it the VIC-20. Today menthol addicts can still purchase the stuff in disgusting phallic containers, under the brand name 'Vic', conclusively proving that Sinclarium Basic and nose picking are still one of the same thing. You have been warned.

## ~ TWENTY TWO ~

**NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.** In 1938, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlain, flew to Munich to sign a peace treaty with the German strategy games wholesaler Adolf Hitler. Chamberlain was a bit of an old stick-in-the-mud, and he refused to use a modern calculator to work out the deal, preferring to rely on his abacus. The treaty was a disaster, mainly because his abacus was made out of two short planks, several crossed wires and a load of balls.



## ~ TWENTY THREE ~

**WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST.** It is not generally known that it was the American newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst who first came up with the idea of leisure software. In 1939 he opened the first Playboy Club for retired Naval Officers. Much interfacing took place, and the most famous Playboy Bunny became notorious as the Commodore Pet.

## ~ TWENTY FOUR ~

**PEARL HARBOUR.** During the 1940s heyday of Hollywood, all American leading ladies were played by robots in blonde wigs, in memory of the computing pioneer Blondin. This is why they always smiled but never took their clothes off. In 1942 the Japanese infiltrated the American robot cinema industry by creating their own leading lady, Pearl Harbour, who went down a bomb. Lulling the world in a false sense of security by losing World War II, the Japanese successfully invaded the planet (except certain parts of Ludlow), and today miniature Third Generation spy robots are in every household, going by the name of Barbie, Cindy and My Little Pony.

Well folks, it is Christmas after all, and Julian only gave me a week's notice to try and entertain you. The men and women who developed computing have all been half way round the bend, somewhere between creative genius and the toilet bowl. I should know, as Computing Great Numbers TWENTY-SIX to ONE HUNDRED will prove that I invented entertainment software single handed. Until then, I will leave you with Number Twenty-five, the Inventor of the Digital Computer. Your only problem is that it reads like fiction. Happy Christmas everyone, and a peaceful New Year.

## ~ TWENTY FIVE ~

**ALAN TURING.** The digital computer was invented in 1949, by an Englishman named Alan Turing, who was working at Manchester University. Turing was a genius. In 1944 he cracked the Nazi's Enigma Code, which led to the Allied victory over Hitler's forces, and for that alone he should have become a hero. This was not to be. In Peter Wright's notorious *Spy Catcher*, Turing's career is spotlighted, with emphasis on his friendship with anti-fascists, and homosexuals like Sir Anthony Blunt, as well as his work with Alistair Watson, who was head of one of the most secret and vital sections of the entire NATO defence set up. But he has been scrubbed from the history books for being a 'convicted homosexual'. Evidence of his 'crime' was found when the British Secret Police burgled his home, and Turing was carted off for a 'cure' with hormone treatment. After a year or so, his spirit had been broken and he had begun to grow breasts. Alan Turing committed suicide in 1954, he was 42 years old.

SIZZLER

ZZAP! TEST

# COSMIC CAUSEWAY

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys**

●**Stunning 3D racing action across infinite landscapes in space**

When *Trailblazer* appeared, it was hailed as one of the best race games ever. Now Gremlin have released its sequel, which boasts some major alterations.

*Cosmic Causeway* is basically a race against the clock, set over a 24-level landscape. The player attempts to steer a rolling ball across a rapidly scrolling chequered landscape, jumping hazards, and accelerating or braking as conditions dictate. All mistakes are paid for in terms of time, with an unlimited number of balls being supplied.

The action is depicted in true 3D, and the landscape scrolls under the ball and to left or right as the player steers. As progress is made along the causeway, different coloured squares are encountered, all of which have individual effects on the ball.

The 24 levels are divided into six sections, each with four levels. At the end of each section lies a flying dragon, who launches fireballs when the player draws near. These knock the ball out of play for a few seconds if they aren't avoided. To pass, the dragon must be destroyed by repeated blasting. The player is temporarily endowed with firing abilities to achieve this.

Other obstacles appear on the landscape, and are shot or avoided, as prescribed by the action. Trees and aliens are encountered, plus walls which block the course and only have one opening through which to pass.

At the end of every level, any time remaining is added onto the allotted time for the next, and converted into bonus points. At the end of a section only the numerical bonus is awarded, a new timer starting thereafter.

Between levels, the player also has the opportunity to activate icons, using glowing credits picked up along the course. These endow the player with a wide variety of abilities.




**When I first saw** Cosmic Causeway**, I nearly fell off my chair – it's incredible! It's a sort of cross between** Space Harrier **and** Trailblazer**, but is far, far better than both. The graphical effect is utterly amazing, and the ground's speed gives an incredible feeling of exhilaration. On later levels, when there are oncoming hazards to avoid, the going gets particularly hairy, and blasting the giant dragon is very satisfying.** Cosmic Causeway **isn't just pretty – it plays like a dream. The gameplay is extremely well balanced, and you always seem to progress just a little bit further with every game – consequently it's difficult to put the joystick down. The credits idea is a good one, forcing the player to plan ahead so that obstacles can be avoided and levels negotiated.** Cosmic Causeway **is thoroughly enjoyable, and should appeal to racing and shooting enthusiasts alike.**

**It's not very often I'm stunned by a game, but** Cosmic Causeway **is a pleasant exception. On seeing it for the first time, my immediate feelings were of disbelief: 'The 64 can't do that . . . can it?' The playing 'area' (how do you describe infinity) is just incredible – smooth, very fast and totally convincing. Not only is the game a joy to behold, it's also incredibly playable. The designer has done a great job, with levels that are** just **completable. It reminds me of** Buggy Boy **in that sense, as you cruise over the line with one or two seconds to spare! The level of difficulty is also graded well, so later sections are difficult, but still provide a challenge, rather than appearing unattainable.** Cosmic Causeway **could well lose its appeal after a few weeks, but until that time it's got to be the computer experience of the year.**







**PRESENTATION 88%**
Simple, but user-friendly layout.

**GRAPHICS 95%**
Truly stunning, fast 3D graphics.

**SOUND 85%**
Impressive sound effects, and a good soundtrack runs throughout.

**HOOKABILITY 94%**
Very easy to start playing.

**LASTABILITY 85%**
The levels start getting hard at around the fifth, so reaching the 24th should be tricky to say the least.

## OVERALL 93%
A technically superb game that's both visually impressive and fun to play.

ZZAP! TEST SIZZLER

# SKATE OR DIE

**Electronic Arts, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only**

**●Superb skateboard action in Electronic Arts' Sizzling simulation**

The current skateboard revival has prompted the release of several skating programs, with the latest addition being Electronic Arts' unusual-sounding *Skate or Die*.

In this simulation, the player practices or competes in five different events against up to seven other friends, or one of three computer opponents.

The action begins in the skate shop, where the player is given the choice of signing in, choosing his board colour, and practising or competing in events. Selections are made by directing a small 'Skate or Die' icon around the screen and pressing the fire over the desired option.

The player enters events by leaving the skate shop, whereupon an aerial view of the town square is shown, with labelled roads heading off in different directions. Five roads lead to individual events, and the sixth takes the player to each in turn. Selections are made by simply guiding the skateboarder to the desired road, at which point the event is separately loaded.

The first event features the player's attempts at stunt work on a freestyle ramp – a large U-shaped construction made from steel and wood.

The player starts at the top of the left side of the ramp and once launched, has ten complete passes to score as many points as possible by performing tricks and stunts. Stunts can be mixed together, and the more difficult the manoeuvre, the higher the bonus points awarded. Those available include kickturns, rock 'n' roll, footplant, rail slide, handplant, aerial, and ollie air.

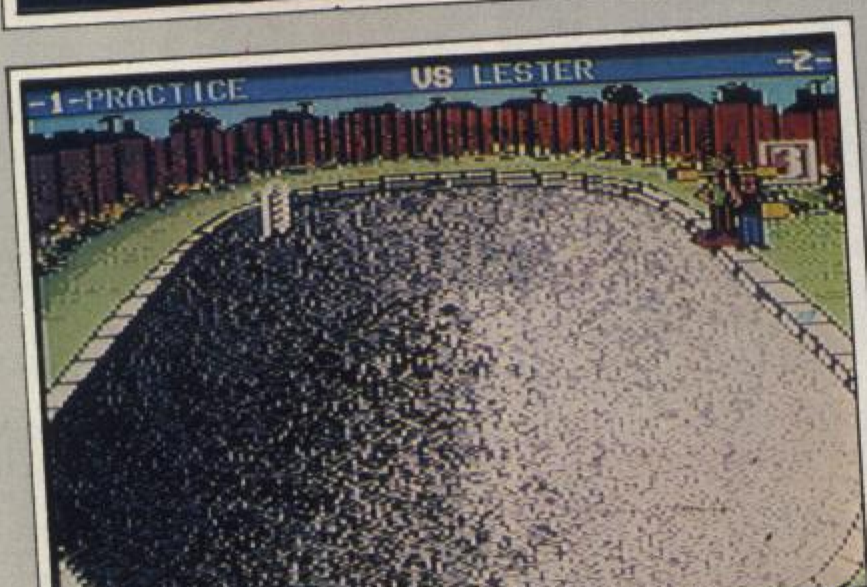
The next event – the high jump – also uses the ramp, but relies more on power than dexterity to achieve a good score. Speed is generated by rapidly moving the joystick from side to side, and the player has five complete passes to achieve the greatest height. If the player considers that he has reached his peak early, he can mark the point, by pressing the fire button, and quit the event.

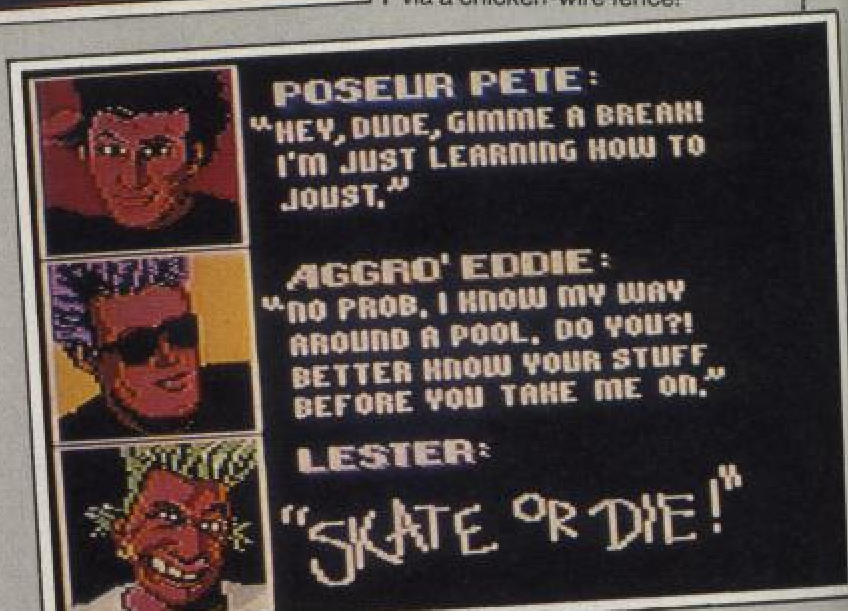
Leaving the high jump, the skateboarder's next port of call is the downhill race, in which he speeds through a parkway, dodging hazards by jumping, spinning, ducking and slide turning down the vertically scrolling course. Control may be switched between 'regular' and 'goofy' – the former relating to control with respect to the landscape, and the latter with respect to the board itself.

The fourth event is another vertically scrolling downhill, this time involving a 'jam' through town. The player skates head-to-head against either a human or computer controlled opponent. The course is set within an urban environment, having dozens of potentially lethal hazards – hence the name of the game.

There are three types of punches and kicks at the players' disposal, which are used to gain points by damaging both the surrounding area and the opposition. Over-enthusiastic combatants who fail to watch the course, however, are rewarded by a variety of nasty comeuppances, not least of which is being reduced to chips via a chicken-wire fence!



The final event is the pool joust, where two players skate around an empty swimming pool, taking to knock each other off their boards using a 'boffing stick'. Each player has five 'passes' round the pool with the padded bar, and the first one to have felled the other player three times is deemed the winner. The contest must be won by at least two clear hits, so at two-all, the skaters enter a tie-break. In the absence of a human opponent, the player does battle against one of three computer-controlled skaters.




If the events are tackled as a proper competition, overall points are given for each event: five for a win, three for second place, and one for third. The overall winner is the skater with the highest total at the end of the final event.





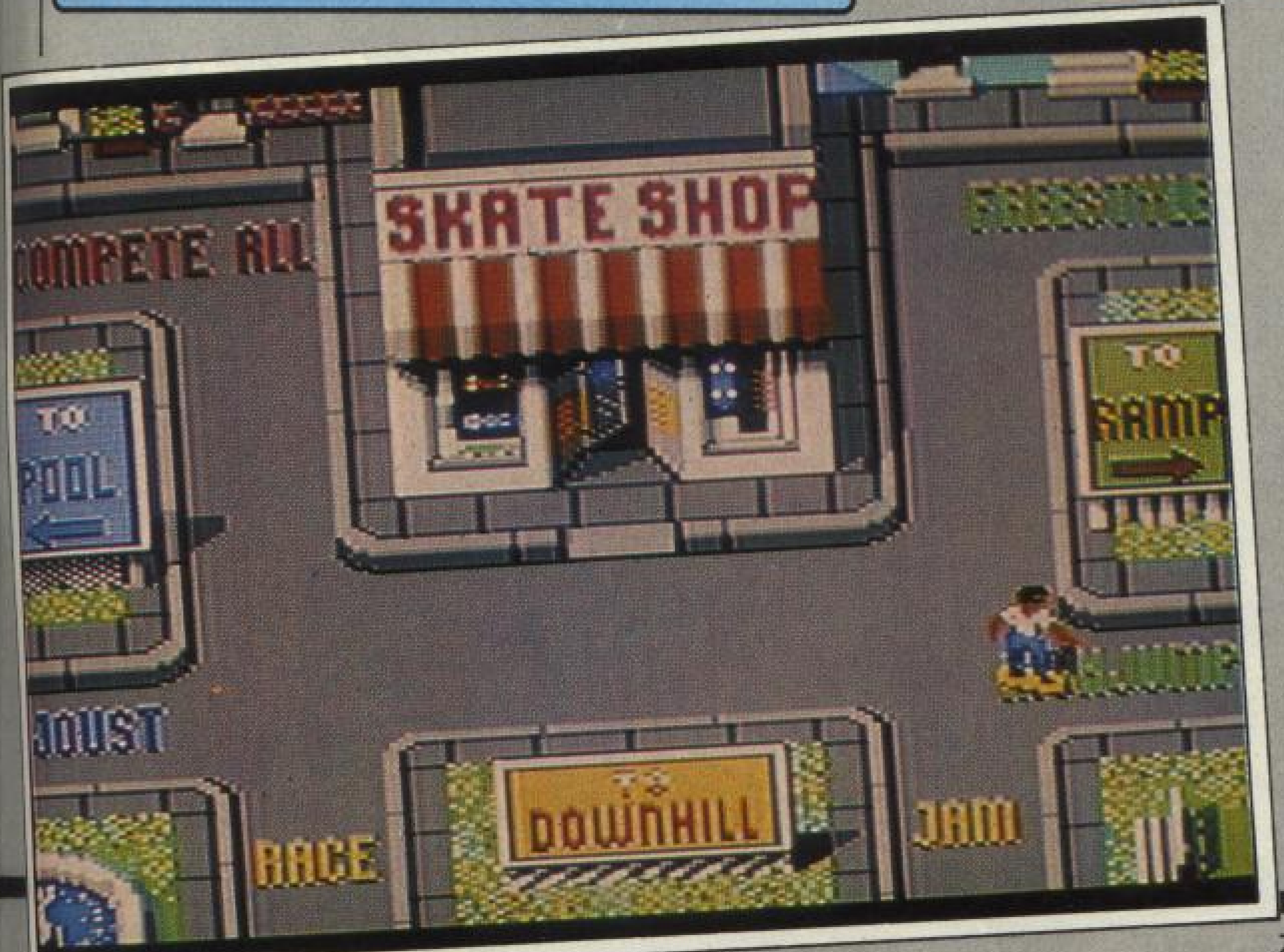


**Commodore owners are completely spoilt for choice this Christmas, with heaps of quality software around. At the forefront comes** Skate or Die**, a program that has obviously had a large amount of attention lavished upon it. If graphics alone could sell a game, EOA would be running out of tapes and disks.** Skate or Die **has some of the most realistic animation and believable backdrops I've ever encountered on a 64. The downhill race through the park is a visual treat – it's practically like watching a film, such is the attention to detail and smoothness of the action. The title music is also superb, although some of the individual game tunes are a little lacking. Aesthetics apart, each game is very addictive and has a variety of playing styles, which should endear it to a wide audience. The single drawback is the interminable multiload, which tends to induce 'between game boredom'. Still, a single load couldn't hope to compete with the package on offer here, and quality always comes at a cost.**

**The animation on** Skate or Die **is amazing! When I say that just skating normally, the figure rotates through SIXTEEN different positions, you'll start to get some idea of the graphic quality. In some events, such as ramp freestyle, there are over 200 frames! On top of that, there are beautifully detailed backgrounds with marvellous use of colour. But, not happy with assaulting the visual senses, Electronic Arts have put in a title tune that will not only blow your mind, but take it out and mail it to another planet. Should you still not be satisfied, there's the gameplay, which is absolutely fabulous. This should meet the demands of the most pedantic skate freaks, and basically, if you're at all into thrashing a board, this is as close as you'll get on a 64, short of bolting rollerskates to the case.**




Skate or Die **has been a long time coming, but it has definitely been worth the wait. The events are very varied, and each one is accompanied by some absolutely stunning graphics. Realism is at a premium, and the sprites and backdrops are amongst the most lifelike ever seen on a Commodore – the detail is incredible. I must confess to finding the joystick waggling high jump very limited, but the rest of the events have plenty of depth and oodles of playability. Both the freestyle and downhill race are very enjoyable, and each should take a long time to master – there are some great hidden bonuses which only the most proficient of skaters could ever hope to find. A special mention has to go to the amazing Rob Hubbard title tune, complete with sampled guitar and organ – surely his best yet!** Skate or Die**'s only bugbear is its multiload system – it's similar in structure to the** Games **style, but unfortunately the loading speed is very slow indeed, and it can become quite frustrating waiting for your favourite event to load. This aside,** Skate or Die **is an extremely polished and playable sports game that should definitely be looked up.**




**PRESENTATION 90%**
Flawless in-game presentation, with blissfully simple icon driven commands, and excellent board control in all events. Let down, to a degree, by the painfully slow loader.

**GRAPHICS 98%**
Animation as smooth as silk, and generally stunning graphics throughout.

**SOUND 97%**
Tremendous title tune, with soundtracks of varying quality for the individual events.

**HOOKABILITY 92%**
Easy enough to pick up and play – but proficiency takes practice.

**LASTABILITY 88%**
There's always some small tweak to be made to your performance, and the computer opponents take some beating.

## OVERALL 92%
Without doubt a brilliant sports simulation, falling short of a higher accolade due solely to the annoyingly slow loading system.


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# INSPECTOR GADGET

**Melbourne House, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys**

Inspector Gadget has been sent to investigate the strange happenings at the International Circus. These are believed to be the work of the subversive organisation MAD. Gadget arrives at the circus, and is promptly knocked unconscious. Later he wakes to find that all his gizmos have been stolen, and his assistant kidnapped . . .

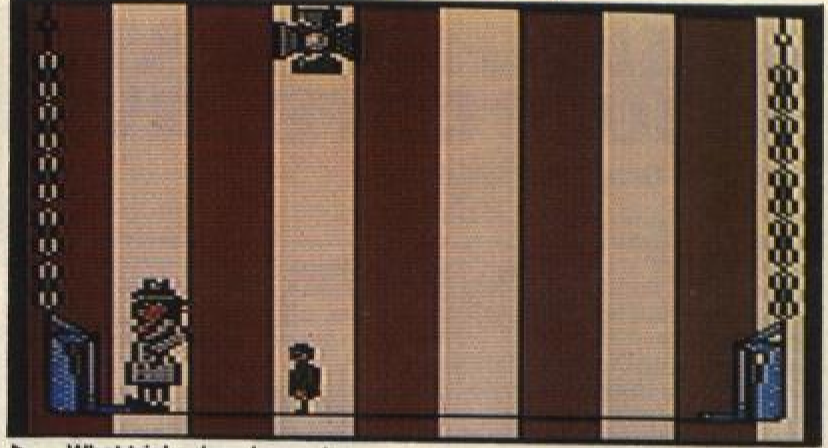
The player enters the action at this point, and is required to find the stolen equipment, Penny the assistant, and all the MAD agents within a fifteen minute time limit.

Gadget moves around the flick screen circus, and searches objects by touching them. Occasionally he finds one of his gadgets, which is automatically added to his inventory.

Hazards to avoid include circus creatures and disguised MAD agents, whose touch stuns Gadget for 30 seconds. When the Inspector finds his binoculars and arms, he can detect and capture the disguised MAD agents. Should all six hidden agents be collected, he can rescue Penny and complete the mission.



**Melbourne House have been guilty of various crimes against computer gaming in the past, but with** Inspector Gadget **they've surpassed even themselves. The potential held by the character is enormous, but Melbourne have destroyed it completely, using the Inspector as the catalyst for an unprofessional and utterly inept 'search and collect' game. The sound and graphics are poor, but adequate. It's with the game design that the real problems lie. Collision detection is at fault, and the Inspector can often walk 'through' walls, yet get hit by characters that are seemingly half a screen away. The mission is completed with ease, and therefore offers a** very limited **challenge. Playtesting is obviously a dirty word at Melbourne House.**



► What tricks does Inspector Gadget have up his sleeve?



**The poor graphics strike you the instant play starts, and most sprites have only two or three frames of animation. Then, the awful game design hits you. Infuriating things continually happen, such as entering a room and being stunned by a creature you didn't even have time to see, let alone avoid. The room is displayed for a split second, which means you often don't even realise you've been hit – unless you're watching very closely. The mission takes to or three goes to solve, and there's absolutely no challenge thereafter.**

**PRESENTATION 29%**
Joystick or keyboard control, but the instructions are pathetic.

**GRAPHICS 31%**
Very poor animation, and basic backdrops.

**SOUND 63%**
Some catchy tunes play throughout.

**HOOKABILITY 23%**
Straightforward action, but many aspects instantly annoy.

**LASTABILITY 9%**
Amazingiy easy to solve, and therefore lasting appeal is severely lacking.

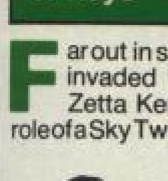
**OVERALL 9%**
A feeble attempt at a potentially interesting licence.

# SKY TWICE

**American Action, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys**

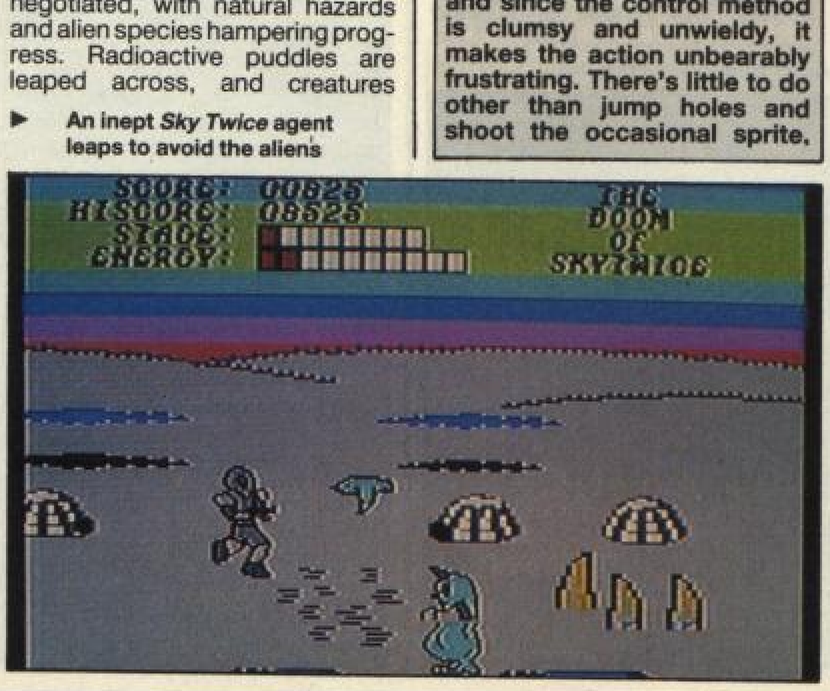
Far out in space, evil forces have invaded the third planet of Zetta Kenntaury Taking the role of a Sky Twice agent, the player attempts to recapture the planet by battling his way across a horizontally scrolling landscape.

Eight different stages are negotiated, with natural hazards and alien species hampering progress. Radioactive puddles are leaped across, and creatures blasted or avoided as necessary. Contact with either hazard reduces the agent's energy, signified by the removal of a section from his energy bar, and the mission is restarted from the beginning of that particular stage.



**Initial hopes of American Action's latest effort are raised by the impressive digitised loading screen. Life is nothing if not capricious however, and the game that follows is enough to make the most hardened 64 combat veteran wince in despair. The jumping action is totally dependent on finding a diagonal, and horizontal motion is limited to three quarters of the screen – jumping near the right hand edge causes your character to 'hit' the scrolling, and usually fall into a hole! If you do happen to like this type of game . . . you have my sympathies.**

► An inept *Sky Twice* agent leaps to avoid the aliens






**I can't understand why American Action have bothered to release** Sky Twice **– it's absolutely dire. Precise jumps are required to negotiate landscape hazards, and since the control method is clumsy and unwieldy, it makes the action unbearably frustrating. There's little to do other than jump holes and shoot the occasional sprite.**

**PRESENTATION 41%**
Decent loading screen, but minimal instructions, and no options.

**GRAPHICS 34%**
Landscapes, objects and sprites have all been treated with equal graphic contempt.

**SOUND 47%**
Mediocre title tune, with a droning and repetitive in-game soundtrack.

**HOOKABILITY 15%**
The incredibly frustrating gameplay is instantly annoying.

**LASTABILITY 8%**
There are eight very difficult levels to negotiate, but the gameplay is unrewarding and tedious to an extreme.

**OVERALL 7%**
A loathsome and ridiculously overpriced game.

# ZZAP! TEST

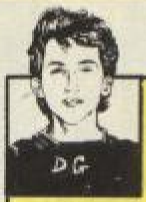
## BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only**

In a rare agreement, Gremlin have acquired the official licence for a computer game version of Walt Disney's *Basil The Great Mouse Detective*.




**I suppose** Basil the Great Mouse Detective **is aimed at an age group to match that of the film. In considering this, I find the game to be none too easy: Basil is incessantly 'attacked' by Ratigan's men (mice?) and his energy is constantly drained. There's no way to avoid his adversaries if you want to examine nearby objects, and unless many mousetraps are found, death is not far away. The graphics are very good, and the game is pretty massive, but rather inappropriate for youngsters I feel.**




**There's nothing original about a platform arcade adventure, but this is a pretty good example of the genre. The graphics are very pretty and nicely animated, and the game is delightfully simple to play, with three large levels to explore. Unfortunately, the action is very repetitive, with many of the rooms looking similar. Although this has been designed to appeal to a younger market, the quality is not sub-standard, as so many conversion deals for 'kiddie' characters are. Check this out if you like arcade adventures, but don't expect anything especially innovative.**

The plot for this adventure is based around the kidnapping of Basil's chubby assistant, Dr Dawson, by the evil Professor Ratigan. Basil sets out to rescue his friend by collecting clues from three scenarios, and has only twelve game hours to complete his task.

The player directs Basil left and right through a series of platform screens, and enters the letter-boxes of surrounding houses, to




► **Walt Disney's latest character battles through Gremlin's computer game**



## AIRBORNE RANGER

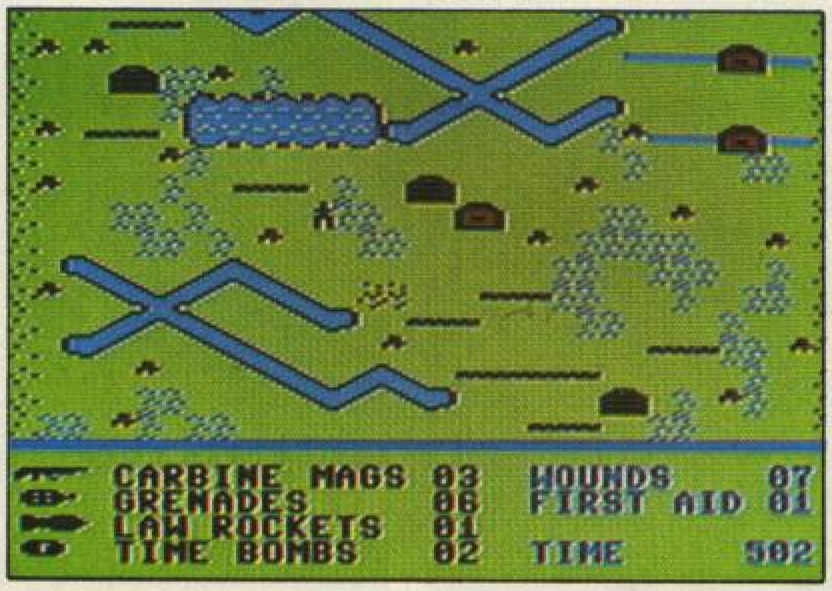
**Microprose, £14.99 cass, £19.99 disk, joystick and keys**

The latest Microprose simulation lets the player join the *Airborne Rangers* and partake in military activities behind enemy lines. There are twelve different scenarios, ranging from destroying an enemy radar installation, through stealing a code book, to cutting a gas pipeline.

The action begins with a vertically scrolling screen, where the player flies behind enemy lines. Supplies are dropped, and the player bails out.

Having landed safely, the action begins. The ranger is directed across the multi-directionally scrolling landscape, and walks, crawls or runs where appropriate. The action zones can be set in arctic, desert or temperate climates, but are always riddled with minefields, enemy bunkers, soldiers and trenches. The ranger heads for a specific point on the map, such as a weapons dump, or a POW camp, carries out his task, and makes his way to the pick up

► **Supplies dropped, the *Airborne Ranger* prepares to bail out**







**If you've ever wanted to become** Rambo **– here's the chance you've been waiting for.** Airborne Ranger **is like a souped-up** Commando, **and gives the player the opportunity to wage a one-man war, causing chaos, destruction and slaughter to an anonymous enemy. I like the way that a Ranger is saved, so that he can be used over and over again until he either retires, or is killed in action. Neither the graphics or sound are particularly outstanding, but the gameplay has plenty of depth, and there are many subtle touches that are only discovered after hours of play. The big drawback is the ludicrously high price tag – if** Airborne Ranger **was a tenner, I'd recommend it.**



► **Just blow up that plane and we can all go home**

enter different areas of the level.

The most important aspect is the examination of objects. This is done by pressing the space bar, causing anything of interest to be shown in the magnifying glass at the bottom of the display. The main items of note are clues, five of which are found in each level to advance to the next. Basil holds up to five objects in his pockets at any one time, and uses his magnifying glass to identify which of these clues are false. Once he has all five correct clues in his pockets, he uses his glass to direct him to the level's exit.

Basil's energy is depleted when he's touched by Ratigan's henchmen, who patrol every screen. Should his energy run out completely, he becomes inanimate and the adventure ends.



**The graphic artists have done an excellent job, and the sprites have a lovely cartoon quality about them. However, I think that they're let down a little by the actual game – which is nothing more than a platform arcade adventure. This is by no means a Bad Thing, but I find it sad that the designers haven't produced something more original for such a great licence. The going is tough from the start, but with a little mapping, the playing area soon becomes familiar, and adversaries are dodged with relative ease.** Basil **has plenty of challenge on offer, and should appeal to ardent arcade adventurers.**

**PRESENTATION 77%**
Few options, but pleasant screen layout and instructions.

**GRAPHICS 83%**
Effective, colourful screens with smart, well animated sprites.

**SOUND 62%**
A tuneful melody plays on the title screen, but the sound effects are paltry.

**HOOKABILITY 68%**
The familiar platform format isn't too appealing, but is immediately playable.

**LASTABILITY 73%**
Despite its simplicity, the game is massive, tough, and throws down a strong challenge.

**OVERALL 77%**
A very good platform game, which is possibly too difficult for its designated market.

point, where a helicopter arrives to take him home. Every mission has a time limit, and the ranger is able to sustain three serious wounds before dying.

The hero has a limited supply of five weapons: a rifle, knife, grenades, time bombs and an anti-tank missile launcher. He also has medical kits, which are used to heal injuries. Extra supplies are picked up if the supply pods dropped at the beginning of the mission are located.

Successful rangers are awarded points, based on the efficiency of their operation, and are saved to disk or tape for future missions.



**Microprose has again produced a game with enough arcade action to keep trigger-happy players blasting till the cows come home, and plenty of strategy for the map-and-dividers squad. One of the good points is that missions aren't simply soldier killing exercises, but often have orders NOT to shoot anybody until near the target area, so as not to alert the enemy to your presence. The game also instills a tendency to take more care of your character than in many combat games, as the same one is taken through many scenarios. The main criticism I have is that in the long run, scenarios become repetitive. The other flaw is the ludicrous overpricing – twenty pounds on disk, and fifteen on tape is really going over the top, and makes the game poor value for money.**

**PRESENTATION 95%**
Excellent presentation throughout. Brilliant instruction manual, and there's even a keyboard overlay.

**GRAPHICS 72%**
Reasonably well animated sprites, but the backdrops are very bland.

**SOUND 52%**
No music, but good use of effects during the missions.

**HOOKABILITY 76%**
The missions are straightforward, but controls can be daunting, even with the keyboard overlay

**LASTABILITY 81%**
A dozen missions, all with multiple difficulty levels provide plenty of lasting appeal.

**OVERALL 73%**
Lots of action and some real-time strategy – but ludicrously over-priced.

# MEAN STREAK

**Mirrorsoft, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys**

In the 23rd century, technology has advanced so far that society has become a decadent computer-dependent mass. People have no need to venture out of their homes, and all transport is achieved by teleport.

A group called the Rebels are determined to maintain the traditions of the Old Ways, and partake in the dangerous activity of racing on the Battletrack – the abandoned M25 motorway.

The player is a Rebel, and rides a turbo-charged bike in an attempt to complete a whole circuit of the diagonally scrolling Battletrack.

Along the motorway are many hazards to avoid: anarchist 'Outcast Riders' knock the player's bike around, oil slicks and ice patches cause the bike to skid, small pieces of debris damage the tyres, and walls completely destroy the bike and rider, removing one of his four lives.

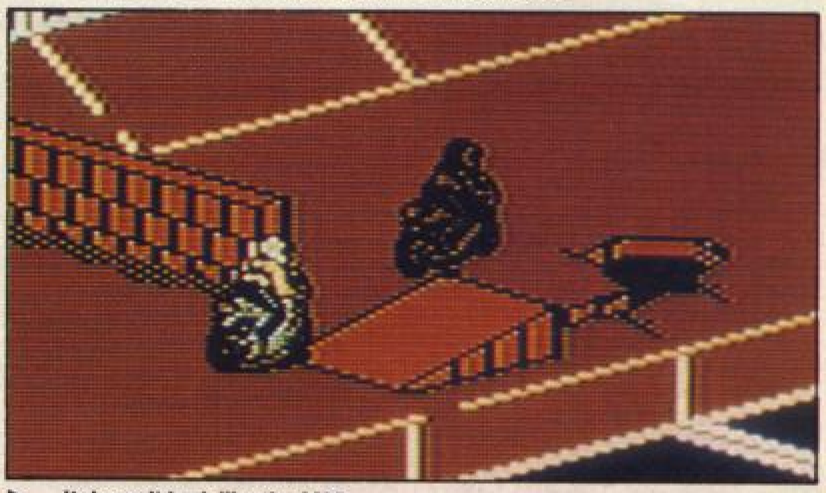
The bike is armed with guns and rockets which are used to blast obstacles, and is also able to squirt oil patches onto the track.



**Diagonally scrolling racing games aren't that common, and with the 'Mad Max' idea of war on the roads,** Mean Streak's **design is fairly unusual. The big problem is the gameplay, which lacks variety. Although the going gets tough on higher levels, there's never a feeling of exhilaration or excitement – and in fact I'd nearly call** Mean Streak **a shoot 'em up! The two player head-to-head aspect definitely provides fun, but for a single player, the rather repetitive soon becomes dull.**

All weapons are expendable, but extra supplies can be picked up at regular intervals.

The motorway is split into five levels, which are all conquered to finish a complete circuit of the old Ring Road.



► It doesn't look like the M25 has changed much . . .



**This is certainly an unusual variation on the racing/blasting theme, and is presented fairly well. However, the major flaw in its gameplay is the lack of variation: the backdrops are always the same, so there are no surprises once you've been through them a couple of times. Higher levels get increasingly difficult, but they're all ultimately similar, and therefore there's little incentive to battle any further.** Mean Streak **simply isn't varied enough to warrant the ten quid price tag – especially with such a high standard of similarly priced games on offer this month.**

**PRESENTATION 82%**
A pleasant options screen, and simultaneous two player action provide a nice touch.

**GRAPHICS 72%**
Fast, smooth diagonal scrolling, but ineffective sprites and bland backdrops.

**SOUND 74%**
A fairly exciting soundtrack, with decent optional sound effects.

**HOOKABILITY 77%**
Surprisingly simple to play, with fast, enjoyable action.

**LASTABILITY 57%**
Although there's plenty of challenge, the lack of variety means that the appeal wears off quite quickly.

**OVERALL 71%**
A competent race game, with some unusual ideas.

# ALTERNATIVE WORLD GAMES

**Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only**

A new multi-event sports simulation from Gremlin is *Alternative World Games*, a parody of the Epyx *Games* series. There are eight national pastimes featured from around the world.

The action starts when up to six players input their names and nationalities. Each country has an 'alternative' anthem – Rule Brittania, for the UK, and the Can-Can for France, for example. Next, up to eight events are selected, and the players choose whether to practice or compete.

The first event is a sack race set in Naples in which two players race a manhole-littered course.



▸ *Alternative World Games* – enough to drive you up the pole . . .



**Gremlin set out to produce a parody on the Epyx** Games **series – and have succeeded in style!** Alternative World Games **is very humorous, but the gameplay hasn't been sacrificed for laughs, and the eight events are all very playable. The animation is superb throughout, with smooth, cartoonesque movement on the participants, and some lovely touches, such as the dog that chases the sack racers. The events are played over some very impressive backgrounds, and the pillow fight on the gondola is absolutely stunning – the canal looks almost real! The events vary from good to very good, with my favourites being the pole climbing and river jumping. The only problem I can see is the multiload system, which holds up the action and gets a little frustrating. Apart from this,** Alternative World Games **is superb, and sports fans should find it both challenging and fun.**

Next is a plate-balancing act where the player attempts to take the most number of plates down a fixed course in the shortest possible time. Accelerating too quickly, or moving around too much sends a wave of disturbance through the plates, causing some to fall off. At the end, a score is awarded on both time and plates remaining.

Third on the agenda is boot throwing. The player swings either an empty or full welly around himself as fast as possible and hurls it as far as he can. Distance is more dependent on the timing and angle of release, than the boot's speed.

The fourth event is river jumping. The player sprints towards the water's edge carrying a long pole, plants it firmly in the middle of the river, and vaults as far as he can onto the other side. Speed varies according to the angle the pole is carried during the approach, but the jumper tires rapidly if the pole is held low for too long.

The somewhat tricky art of pole climbing is next. Two people race head-to-head to reach the top of their respective poles, and retrieve the champagne bottle there. When the top is reached, the bottle is brought down gently.

Running up a wall is the next task facing the player. It's not quite as gravity-defying as it sounds, and involves running at a wall, grabbing a small cap on the way, and trying to pin it as high as possible.



**Although** Alternative World Games **echoes the classic** Games **series, the control methods certainly aren't as smooth as Epyx' efforts, and the gameplay suffers slightly because of it. The level of difficulty between games is also a bit varied, some events being terribly fiddly to operate, such as the pogo-stick event, and others quite simple, such as the sack race. The graphics and animation are outstanding, and the sprites have a definite style to them which is reminiscent of those 'cute' Hungarian cartoons. Not an essential purchase, but if it's a multi-event simulation you're after, this is certainly the one to go for this month.**



**In a month of multi-events, from** Combat School **to** Track 'n' Field**, this must be vying for Oddest Collection award. It makes a pleasant change to have someone making a game tongue-in-cheek, as far too many games take themselves seriously, forgetting that they're supposed to be fun. This one features some lovely graphics, not only the picturesque backgrounds, but also the humorously animated characters. The sound is good on the title screen, where a selection of horribly accurate alternative national anthems are played, but is rather samey in many of the events. The big drawback, and one which has made me hold back on further praise, is that some of the events have 'all or nothing' results – once you've worked out the control, you always finish with the same time or points. This tends to make them very short-lived, as opposed to easier events in which scores are increased as skill is attained.**

The penultimate event is a pillow fight on board a gondola. Two antagonists face each other, and bash away with a variety of moves until one falls in the water.

The last event is a bounce round an obstacle course aboard a pogo stick, bursting balloons along the way. Points are earned for bursting all the balloons in the shortest time.

### PRESENTATION 84%
Very humorous and well designed game layout, only marred by a slow loader.

### GRAPHICS 93%
Superbly animated characters, and beautifully drawn, detailed backgrounds.

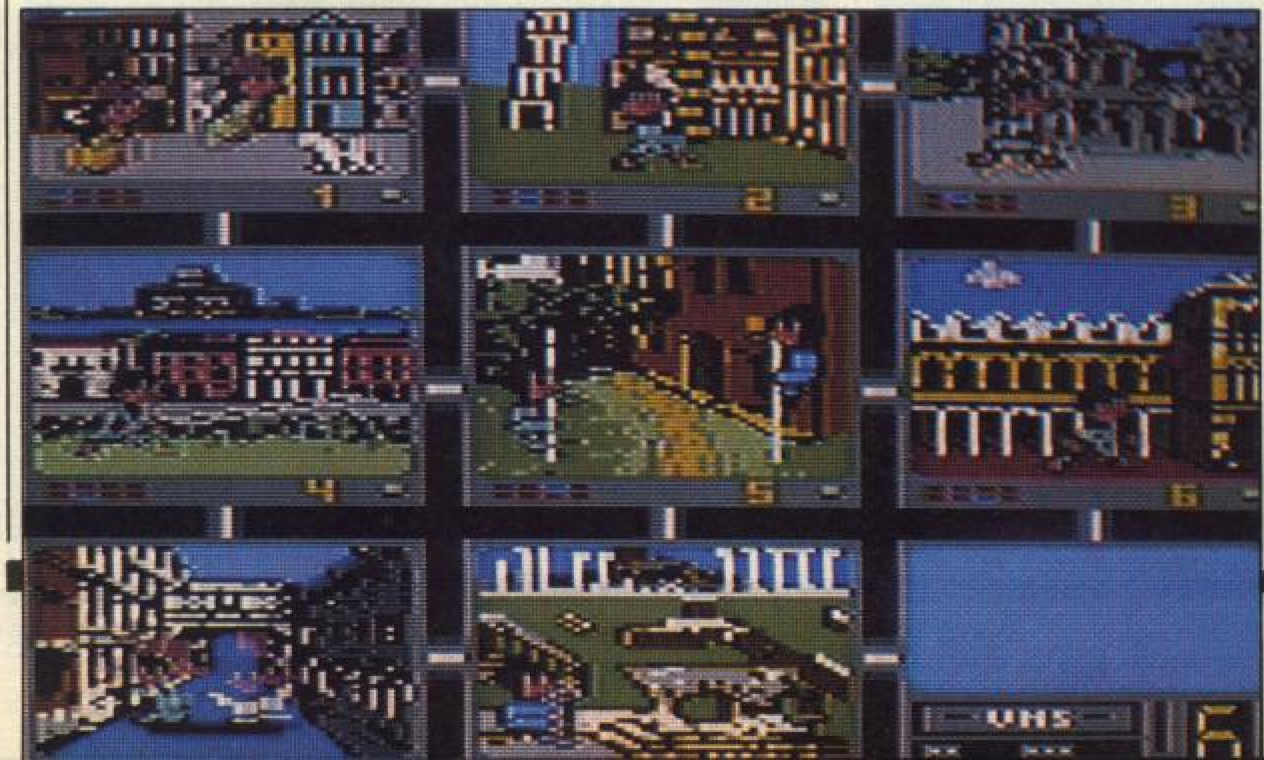
### SOUND 77%
Amusing anthems, and good spot effects.

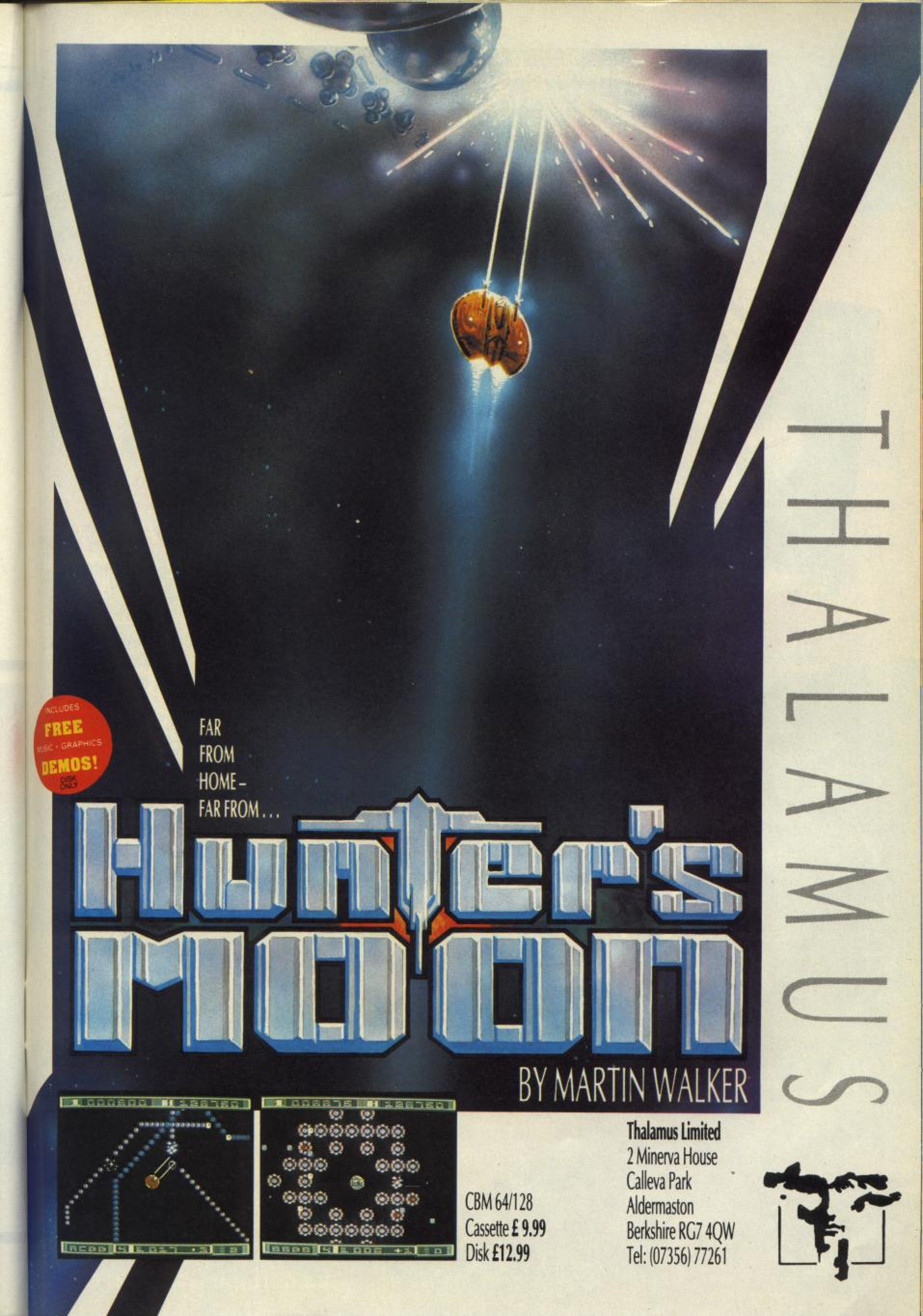
### HOOKABILITY 80%
Most of the events are fun, but have complicated controls which take time to learn.

### LASTABILITY 79%
Eight events should last a while, and with up to six competitors, there's much fun to be had.

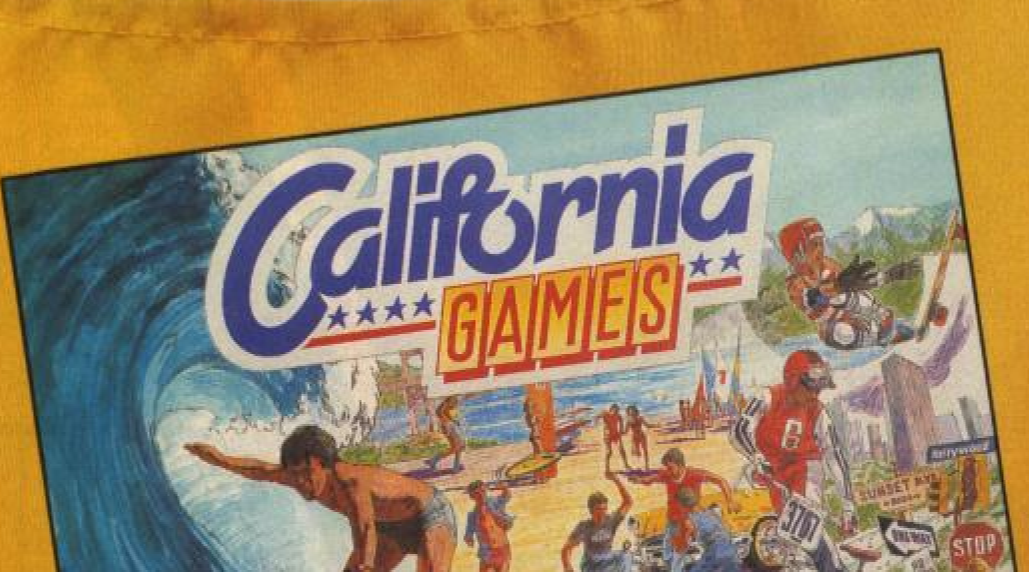
## OVERALL 86%
A high quality, well thought out game that gently pokes fun at the whole multi-event genre.

▸ The impressive title screen gives miniature animated previews of each event




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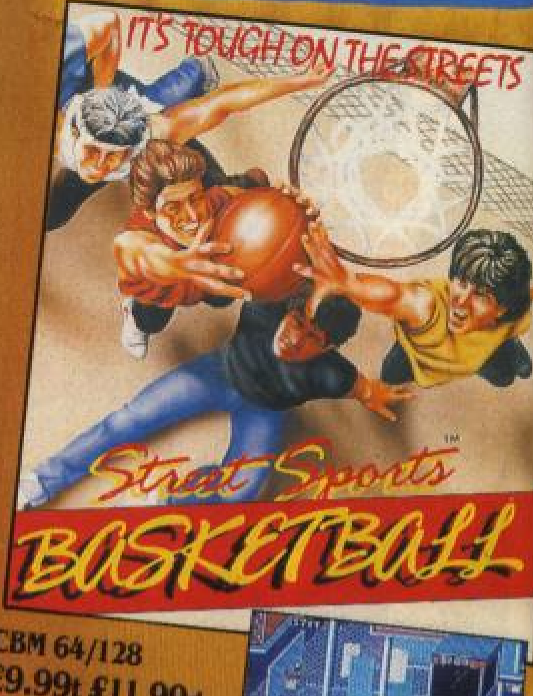

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## PLUS 30 COPIES OF C

Gremlin are a mite chuffed about their new release, *Cosmic Causeway*– and with good reason, too. A review of this Sizzling race game appears elsewhere in these pages, and if you haven't read it yet, go and do so now!

Anyway, such is their pleasure, Gremlin have graciously agreed to provide a similarly cosmic prize to complement the release of the game. On offer is a Phillips Midi hi-fi system, containing record deck, compact disc player, three-band FM tuner, cassette deck supporting Dolby and chrome tapes, an amplifier to make the whole thing work, and high quality speakers pushing out 35 Watts per channel! The whole system is finished in black and has a smoked black perspex lid. Cool, huh?

To win this great system, all you have to do, is decipher the horrendous word square below and find the 12 Gremlin games contained therein (game names made up of more than one word appear as a connected block).

When you think you've found them all, write the game titles on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope, and send them to: **GREMLIN MIDI COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than January the 14th.

The first entry pulled out of the bag will receive the Phillips system, while the next 30 entries will suddenly become the proud possessors of a copy of *Cosmic Causeway*. Gear, man.

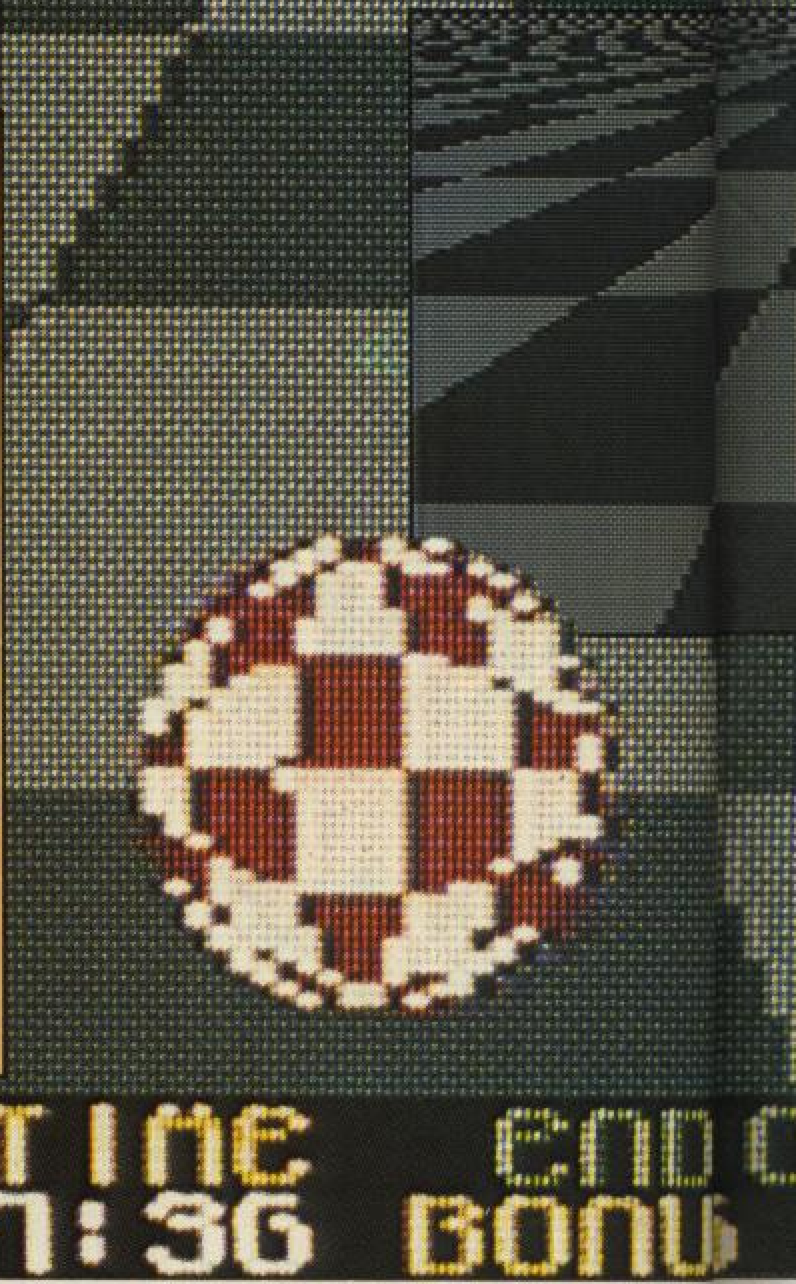
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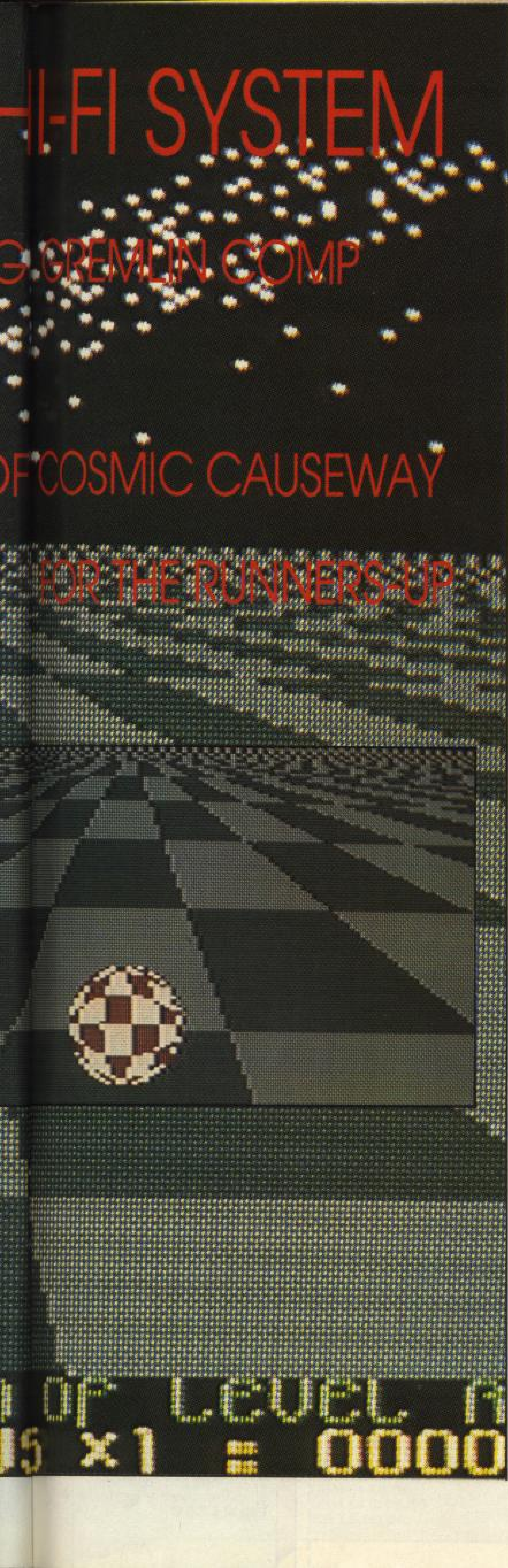
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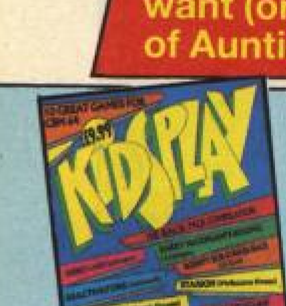
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Robots and robotics systems which represent genuine current technology are very rare in today's movies. Of the few examples available is, strangely, the Chuck Norris action pictures *Code of Silence* (Rank Video) in which cop Norris finally turns on the gang of heavily-armed villains with an armoured, weapon-carrying semi-tank, remotely controlled.

Although the movie takes more liberties with fire-power and sophistication, police robots do exist, as seen in a couple of episodes of *Hill Street Blues* under the command of gung-ho Lt Howard Hunter (James B Sikking). These should eventually reach video libraries on Channel 5, which is handling the series.

Similarly the bomb-defusing robots used by the British Army in Northern Ireland found themselves updated to a modified form in the SF story *Booby Trap* (Medusa), a post-holocaust tale where a young couple, terrorised by mutant street gangs, devise a very functional looking robot for revenge. Its offensive capabilities include a few gun barrels and a very useful testicle-crushing claw. Eek!

More feasible current robotics came in the highly praised Australian production *Malcolm* (Virgin Video), in which Colin Friels played the title character, a slightly retarded and withdrawn young man who happens to have a genius for heath-robinson style robots and cybernetic systems for serving him tea in bed and opening the mail.

Events take a twist when he takes a young couple as lodgers after the death of his mother, and the boyfriend turns out to be a convicted criminal who can see the potential for Malcolm's robots to perform the perfect bank robbery.

Funny and slightly poignant by turns, at its funding stage the movie almost outdid the fiction of the plot when the producer actually sent one of the remote-controlled robots into a potential investor's office brandishing a gun and demanding a million Australian dollars. The man, suitably impressed, invested . . .

On a more sinister level, one of the cinema's first plausible murders by current robot technology came in Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar* (CIC Video). A tale of union corruption in Detroit and starring Harvey Keitel, Yaphet Kotto and Richard Pryor, the film features a character who crosses the bribed officials and is locked in the robot-operated paint-spraying shop, asphyxiating as the automatic limbs spray the steel chassis.

Generally Hollywood has wanted its robots to be in 'human' form, ie two legs/recognisable head, rather than the more plausible forms which ... a reality long before the ... anthropomorphised versions the film ... would like. Indeed the robots ... human in *Sleeper* (Warner Home Video) that Woody Allen ... for one by donning a silver ... and sticking a funnel in his ...

...ism", designer Syd Mead, responsible for the visuals in ... (Warner Home Vi...

SSION

...sted, earn bonus scores. ...e provides one mission ..., accessed by shooting ...screen, if you have not ...e ranking and number ...essary to undertake a ... are informed – it ...ast 40,000 points to ...ission for instance, ...f the mission . . . ? ...o find out.

some rooms, which provide essential information on your mission, is a genuinely fine element, and the frantic search to find the one necessary to enable completion of the mission for your next ranking gives the game that 'just one more go' feeling.

That, and the combination of more usual arcade-adventure elements: extra lives can be obtained by touching floating spheres, others provide extra speed, and spinning spheres,

**SPECTRUM 48/128**
**Cassette: £7.95**

This is the ideal sort of presentation for the Spectrum, and so the graphics look good and work well. The sound is acceptable, with a nice tune on the intro and end screens. Gameplay is compelling, even addictive. Don't expect this to be another M.O.V.I.E., because it is not, and perhaps not quite as exciting either, but nevertheless it is a worthy successor.

**OVERALL 78%**

**AMSTRAD CPC**
**Cassette: £8.95**
**Diskette: £14.95**

Plays exactly the same as o... the Spectrum, but ... appearance is ... with colour ... much ...

LETTERS

AGE

Good luck for the future.
**Jon Rose, (Editor of Enigma – Tapezine of the National Spectrum 128 User's Group). Bognor Regis, W Sussex**

*Thank you for your kind compliments Jon; but I wouldn't underestimate CRASH's ability to give THE GAMES MACHINE a fight! Clearly a machine-specific magazine can do far more justice to the needs of a user group in coverage. The object of THE GAMES MACHINE isn't to put either CRASH or ZZAP! out to graze, but to provide a real additional magazine that looks more at the game first, then its implementation on various machines. Thus we look to put things more in context for all user groups, That ... hopefully giving you a good ... (including coin-ops in fut...*

MORE 16-B...

# CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

## ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

**The budget section has a fairly high standard of games this month, as Steve Jarratt finds out while rummaging through the bulging budget file . . .**

### RAINBOW DRAGON
**Firebird Silver, £1,99**

Trapped within a magic labyrinth, the Rainbow Dragon of the title desperately needs someone to guide him to saftey.

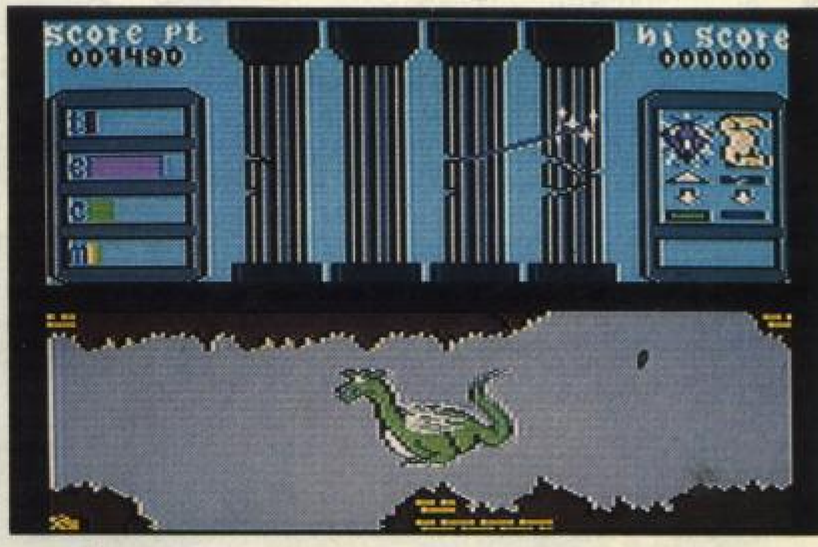
Split in two, the lower half of the screen shows the dragon and his immediate surroundings, while above there is a status panel and four pillars, four icons and a glowing magic staff, control of which is toggled by pressing the space bar. The four pillars represent the slowly decaying cave system, they crack and crumble as the game progresses.

The cave presents a series of puzzles; ten magic chests are to be destroyed to escape the labyrinth. These lie in the caves, blocked from access by a variety of obstacles which may be removed with magic.

Although well presented and smart looking, *Rainbow Dragon* is slow, cumbersome, has very obscure puzzles and unrewarding gameplay. Mappers and arcade adventurers may like it, but everyone else should think twice before reaching for a couple of pound coins.

**OVERALL 41%**

► The magic dragon goes puffing his way through the underground caverns




### SPORE
**Bulldog Software, £1.99**

A bio-engineering complex has been overrun with genetically altered spores. The only pesticide that can destroy them is stored in the base, and therefore someone needs to enter the complex and collect as many barrels of it as possible.

Each laboratory, seen from overhead, is represented by a static screen. The mission begins in a manoeuvrable star-shaped craft, which has multi-directional blasters directed via the joystick.

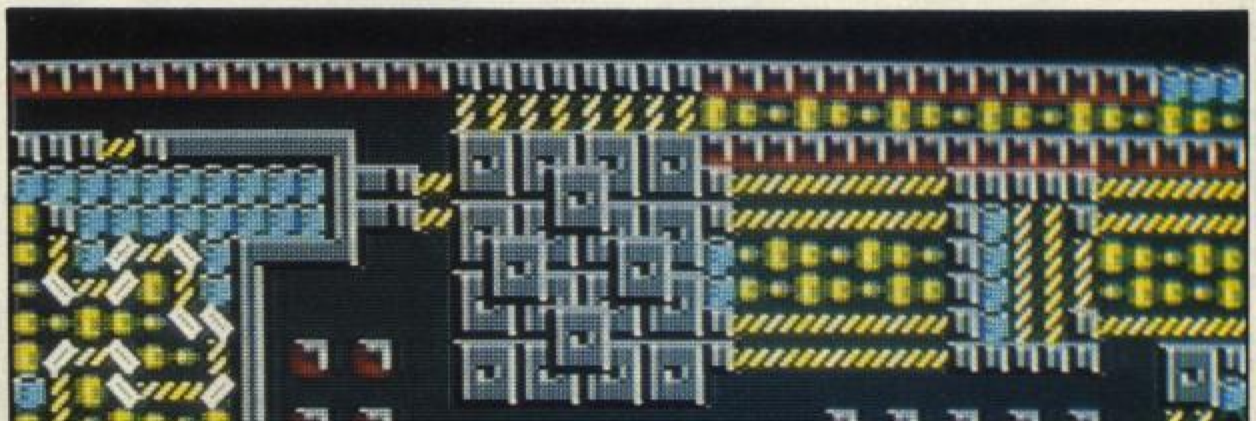
Pesticide barrels are found lying amid spore generators and waves of glowing spores. Access to the next lab is gained only when all the barrels have been collected, which involves negotiating the screen's puzzle-like layout.

Laser beams block sections of the lab, but are turned on and off by blasting the blue beam generators, and re-directed by shooting reflectors. Doing this also releases the previously enclosed spores however, allowing them to flood toward the ship and drain its energy. Energy is replaced by collecting flasks, but these are easily blasted.

*Spore* is a tremendous little game, and the action is fast-paced, hectic and extremely enjoyable. The gameplay is original enough to warrant a higher price tag than it has here, and the inclusion of a screen designer and a superb shoot-'em-up loader game makes it an essential purchase.

**OVERALL 97%**

► Mastertronic's *Spore* is a brilliant display of ordered chaos!



## RADIUS
**Players, £1.99**

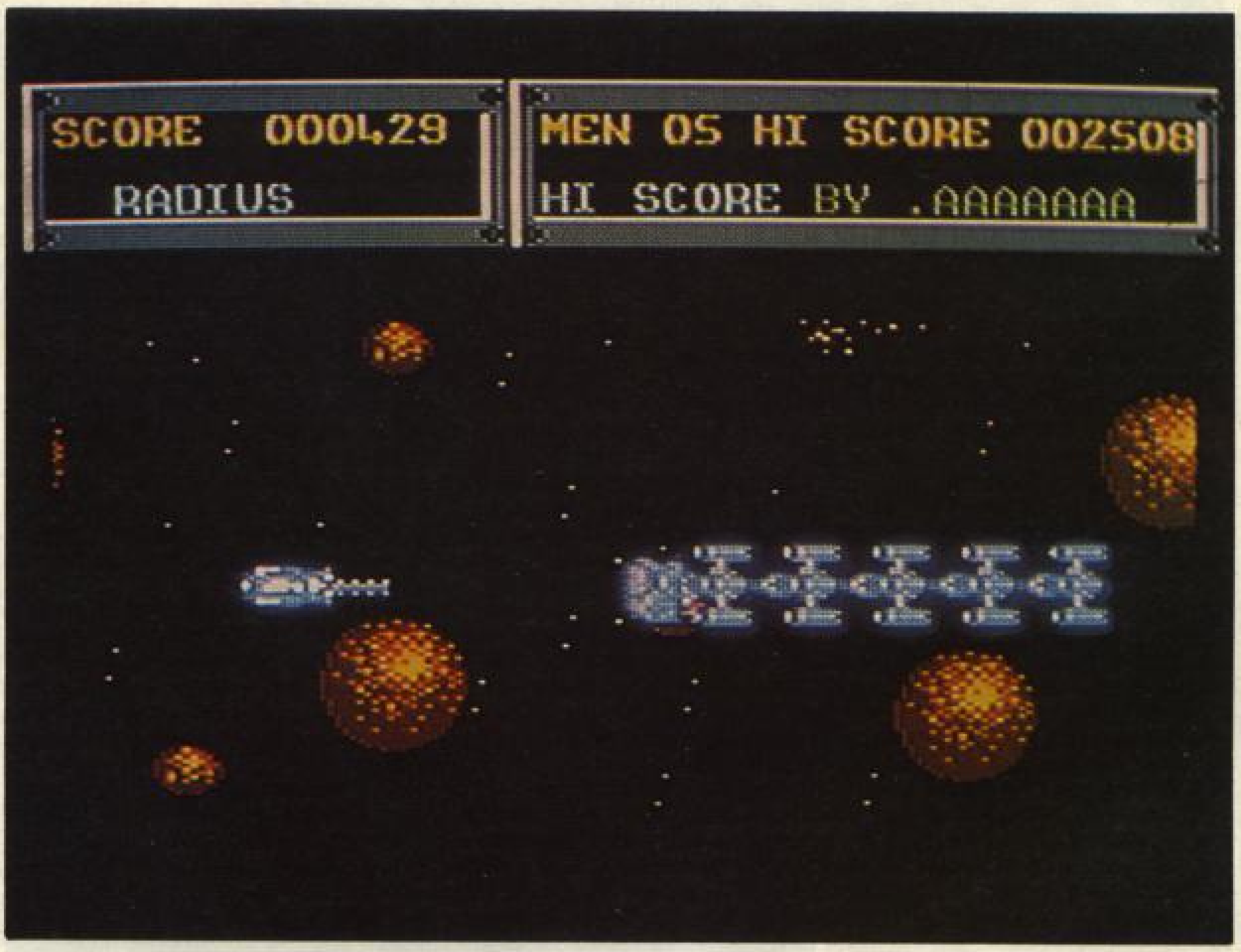
In this mediocre *Delta* clone, you are a starpilot who has volunteered to regain control of the RADIUS, a hyperspace transport route recently captured by alien forces.

The action is over a horizontally scrolling starfield. Alien attack waves appear from the right-hand side of the screen (occasionally from the left) and are blasted or avoided as the situation dictates.

A mothership appears periodically and destroying it accesses a bonus level. Here, three moving bars are shot and destroyed to reveal a target beyond, in true *Phoenix* style. Blocks are dropped continuously, and once the baseline is completely covered, the space section is entered once more.

The ship is very slow-moving, and the speed at which the alien waves appear make *Radius* a difficult and annoying game to play. The bonus section is not thrilling, and generally the action is unoriginal and ultimately tedious. Not one to lose much sleep over.

**OVERALL 49%**




Space blasting action in *Radius*

## KROMAZONE
**M.A.D., £2.99**

The Kromazone is a testing ground for trainee starfighters at Centre Point – the Terran Space Fleet Naval Academy. Here, the fleet's best pilots are put through their paces before being let loose on the sworn enemies of Earth, the Maranzar.

The Kromazone is displayed from a viewpoint inside the player's craft, with the chequered landscape moving rapidly and convincingly beneath. At first, large globes hover above the ground and are successfully dodged to access the next wave. Only then does the ship's cannon become activated, allowing attacking vessels to be destroyed. As each wave is obliterated, a score sheet appears, showing the number of successful kills and points awarded.

*Kromazone* presents some stunning graphics, and the gameplay is fast and furious. It possibly lacks lasting appeal, since the attack waves do not vary on subsequent plays, but *Kromazone* offers a good blast.

**OVERALL 72%**




The three robotic Stooges go through their repertoire in *Survivors*

## TRIVIAL FRUIT
**Pirate, £2.99**

In the wake of the *Trivial Pursuit* fad, Pirate has released its own budget version, entitled *Trivial Fruit*.

The game presents a series of questions, together with five multiple-choice answers, representing a different fruit. Selecting the correct answer rewards the player with that fruit, which appears on his score card. The card is filled completely to win a 'long game', but a 'short game' only continues until, in true one-armed bandit style, the player achieves three of a kind.

An adjustable timer is provided to keep up the pressure, and up to four players may compete individually. The program contains ten sets of questions, and also supports inclusion of the player's own questions.

As with its more famous predecessor, *Trivial Fruit* is tremendous fun when played in a crowd, and the package is surprisingly comprehensive. Cost-conscious Triv fans could do a lot worse than this offering from Pirate.

**OVERALL 88%**

Gosh, isn't Cam clever?




## SURVIVORS
**Atlantis, £1.99**

This is a cross between *Repton*, *Boulderdash* and *Thunderbirds*. A hibernation dome has been damaged during a nuclear holocaust, trapping almost a thousand survivors within its boulder-strewn interior.

A rescue mission is sent of three droids, each having particular abilities: droid one tunnels through earth, droid two teleports the people to safety and the third moves single boulders out of the way. It's the player's task to coordinate the team's efforts through the dome's seven levels in order to make the mission a success. Each robot is directed from keyboard or joystick, and the player cycles through them by pressing the fire button.

MK1 Guardian robots also inhabit the ruined dome, and radioactive fall-out has damaged their circuits, making them hostile. These are trapped or destroyed by dropping boulders on them.

The gameplay is taxing both mentally and dexterously, and *Boulderdash* fans suffering from withdrawal symptoms should enjoy *Survivors* quite a lot.

**OVERALL 79%**

# RAMPAGE

**Activision, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick and keys**

In yet another big licensing deal, Activision have bought the cult arcade game *Rampage* to the home computer market.

Between one and three players take the part of mutated monsters George, Lizzie or Ralph, as they set about destroying a city full of buildings. Control is via joystick, with the third participant utilising the keyboard.

The monsters are initially dropped onto the screen, and are confronted by several buildings, all of which are destroyed to advance to the next level. This is achieved by climbing up the sides of buildings, and either smashing out the windows, or knocking holes in the side. Once enough structural damage has been inflicted, it collapses in a cloud of dust.




**Rampage is one of those games that is very dull when played solo, but suddenly becomes a great laugh when a couple of players join in the action. The graphics and sound aren't particularly brilliant, but manage to capture the spirit of the arcade machine quite well. Control is sometimes awkward, and it's quite difficult to get your monster to climb up the side of a building without first positioning him with pixel-perfect precision. I don't think Rampage has that much lasting appeal – once you've destroyed a couple of tower blocks, you've seen and done everything there is to do. If you've got a couple of friends, brothers or sisters to join in the fun, Rampage should provide some amusement, but if you're a single player, it's probably a better idea to chuck a couple of quid in the arcade game and buy something different.**




**I found Rampage oddly appealing, since you actually get to play a bad guy for a change. The destructive aspect has a lot to do with it, and the game's theme is refreshingly lighthearted. Controlling the beasts, however, is not the best: climbing onto a building proves too precise, meaning that you spend precious seconds fumbling around its base, trying to get a 'grip'. It also seems too easy to fall off – losing valuable damage points in the process. Both the graphics and sound are well catered for, with some lovely sprites, and the effect of the buildings crumbling, both aurally and visually, is great. A silly, pointless arcade conversion, but good fun all the same – especially when playing in the unusual three player mode.**

► Lizzy munches on an after-dinner helicopter and ponders what to do next




All three monsters have damage meters, which are decreased every time they're hit by bullets from army helicopters and tanks, or stay on a collapsing building. An entirely diminished damage meter has fatal consequences.

To supplement their energy, the monsters collect a wide variety of edible objects in the windows of buildings, and protect themselves by smashing the army vehicles that fire at them.

The game ends once all three monsters have returned to their human alter-egos.




**I've never actually played the original arcade Rampage, so I approached this conversion not quite knowing what to expect. What I found was a fairly monotonous bash through some barely-changing screens. The action is very repetitive, and once you've creamed one of the buildings, you've creamed them all! The game features some colourful, reasonably animated monsters, but the background graphics are gaudy and indistinct. The control method is a little tricky, and at times, it seems to be quite difficult to actually climb buildings. I think the problem is that Activision have converted the arcade game pretty well, but the original was nothing outstanding. 'Cult' is a euphemism often used for games that aren't too good, and it certainly applies to this one.**

► Demolition, *Rampage* style



**PRESENTATION 82%**
Reasonable appearance, with a great three player option.

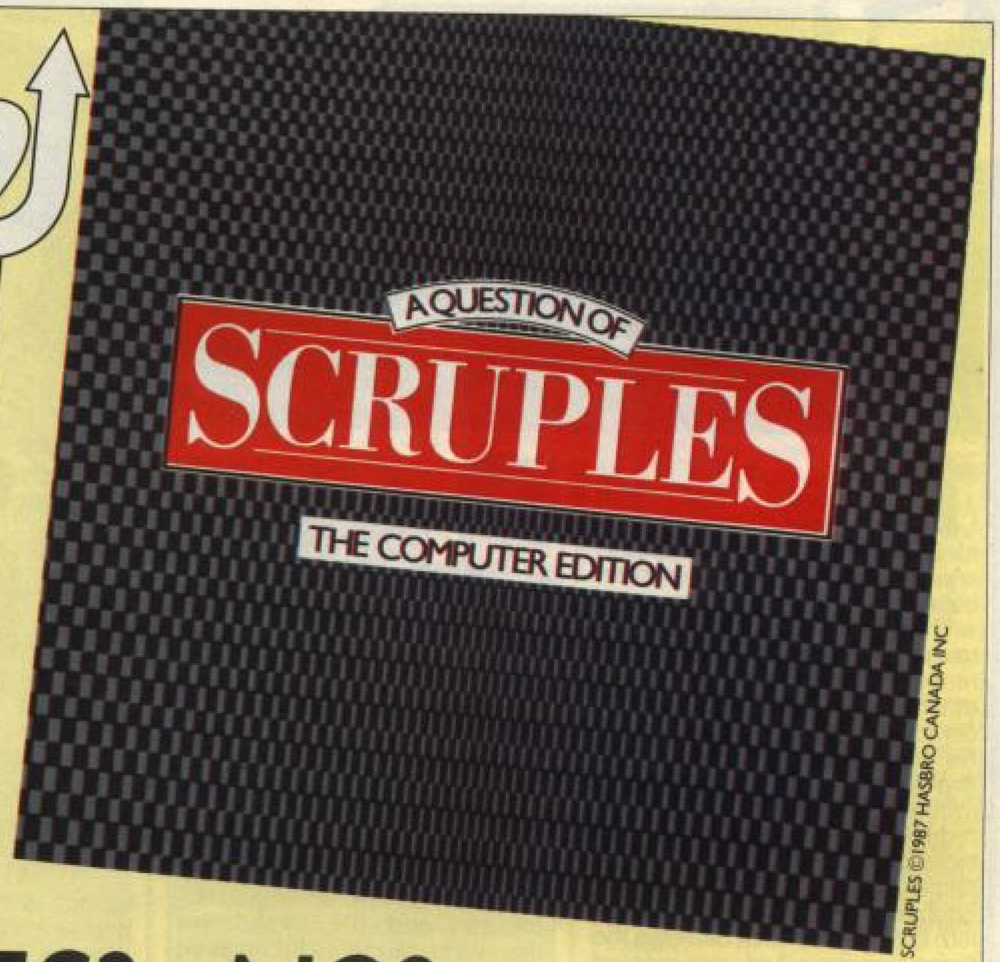
**GRAPHICS 65%**
Colourful backdrops and sprites, although character animation is limited.

**SOUND 63%**
Atmospheric sounds of destruction, and a reasonable, if somewhat unorthodox title track.

**HOOKABILITY 67%**
The slightly finicky control method is a possible first hurdle, but practice makes perfect.

**LASTABILITY 41%**
Once several cities have been razed to the ground, interest wanes.

**OVERALL 62%**
A reasonable conversion that offers multi-player fun, but is ultimately tedious in single player mode.




Q

Scruples, an inventive and original computer game, is in the shops today. Do you rush out and sell a personal possession so you can buy it before pay-day?

Q

Scruples computer game is available on Spectrum 48/128, +2, +3, Commodore 64/128, Amstrad CPC 464, 6128 and Atari ST. The computer you own is not one of these. Do you replace it immediately with one that runs Scruples?

Q

Scruples makes such an excellent Christmas present, you buy one for your computer-mad niece. After one play you are completely hooked – do you keep it?

Q

You are due to keep an important appointment that may affect your future career. Your spouse loads up Scruples and you get involved in a game. Do you keep the appointment?

Q

An attractive colleague at work is becoming very attentive and asks you to dinner. You find out that not only do they dislike Scruples but they hate computers too. Do you accept their invitation?

# YES? NO? ...DEPENDS.

Milton Bradley's compelling game is now available for computer. Anticipate your friend's responses to the provocative questions, in Scruples. Think carefully before answering the moral dilemma you are posed, or turn the tables and give an opposite reply to the one expected! Bluff and counter bluff will be needed, and beware, the other players (the Jury) can challenge your honesty at any time.

The computer interpretation is ingenious and funny. Up to ten people can play: all human, all computer, or any combination. There is a minimum of 64 characters to choose from, each with simulated 'intelligence'. Real players must 'adjust' their personalities and select their appearance from a gallery of faces provided. A minimum of 230 leading questions are built-in and no game will ever be the same.

Scruples, The Computer Edition, is available from all good software retailers or directly from Leisure Genius.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Spectrum 48/128/+2/+3* | *cass* **£9.95** | *disc* **£14.95** |
| *Commodore 64/128* | *cass* **£12.95** | *disc* **£14.95** |
| *Amstrad CPC* | *cass* **£9.95** | *disc* **£14.95** |
| *Atari ST* | – | *disc* **£19.95** |

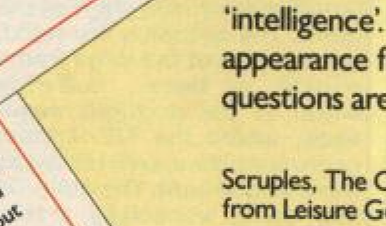
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*Make cheques or postal orders payable to Virgin Games Ltd and send to 2/4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX. DO NOT POST NOTES OR COINS!*

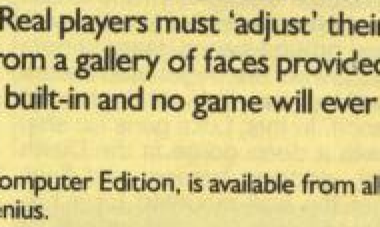
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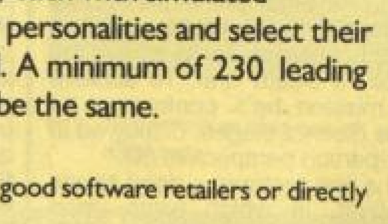
COMMODORE SCREEN



SPECTRUM SCREEN



AMSTRAD SCREEN



ATARI SCREEN

# TRANTOR: THE LAST STORMTROOPER

**GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick only**

Trantor, the last stormtrooper, has been abandoned on an alien planet. By activating the main planetary computer held in the terminal building, the hero can escape.

Trantor finds himself near the terminal building's lift, and to progress further runs, ducks and jumps down the horizontally scrolling corridor. Throughout the mission, his bootsteps are dogged by a myriad of hovering droids and robots, whose deadly touch reduce Trantor's life energy. The stormtrooper is armed with a flame-thrower, which roasts any attacker within range. The problem is that every blast depletes the flame thrower's fuel, represented by a shrinking bar at the top of the screen. However, extra fuel is automatically picked up when a refuelling post is found and activated.

There are eight terminals in the complex, each of which provides a letter, which are ultimately made up into a computer-related word and keyed into the main computer terminal. An ever-decreasing time limit means that there's no time for dawdling in any sector, but discovering a letter resets the time clock.

Once he's assembled the word, Trantor is given a beam code which is used in the beam area, allowing him to escape the planet.





**Running around the horizontally scrolling levels isn't particularly awe-inspiring, and within a couple of goes I'd practically completed the mission. The main character looks impressive, but unfortunately the animation is completely out of synchronisation with the background, and therefore Trantor looks like he's sliding along, rather than running. The alien sprites are nothing spectacular, and the backdrops never struck me as being anything but mediocre. If there was a little more variety in the gameplay,** Trantor **might have been quite good fun – but as it stands it's a barely average arcade adventure that offers little more than a couple of hours entertainment.**







**Large sprites are all well and good, but I don't think this game is suited to them. The giant** Trantor **gives the action a claustrophobic feel, and the tiny playing area makes the game cramped and annoying. It's difficult to dodge aliens, but fortunately they don't take much of a chunk off your energy. The action isn't particularly challenging, and I managed to attain a 96% ('YOU MUST BE BRIAN') rating after one session of play. Once the mission has been completed, interest wanes, and there's little to stop the game being relegated to the darkest corners of the software box. The all-round presentation is good, and the introductory screen great, but I just don't think there's enough challenge on offer to warrant the £10 price tag.**

# STAR WARS

**Domark, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only**

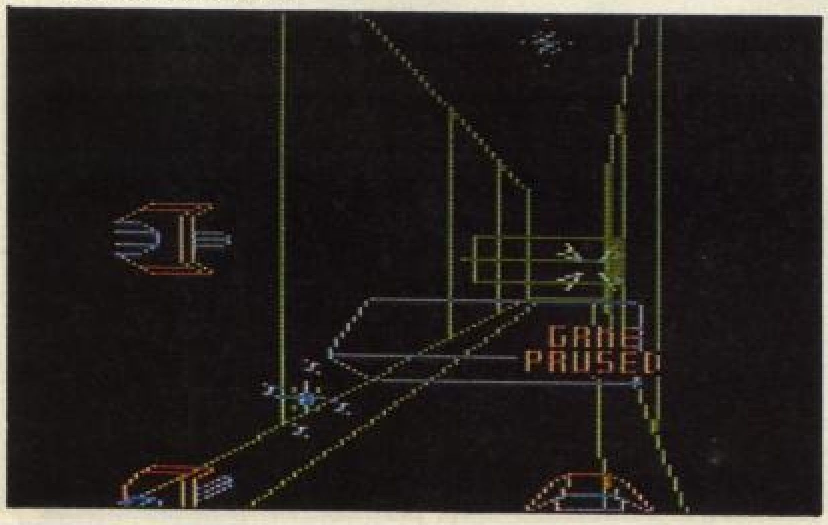
A long time ago, in an arcade far, far away, Atari's *Star Wars* appeared. Several years and a few million credits later, Domark have produced the home computer conversion.

The player takes the role of Luke Skywalker, flying his X-wing in a valiant attempt to destroy the Empire's Death Star. To achieve his mission he's confronted by three distinct stages, displayed in first-person perspective 3D.

The first features a deep space dogfight, in which wave upon wave of missile spitting TIE-fighters are avoided or blasted with the X-wing's lasers. Every time a missile hits the X-wing, it loses one of its nine units of energy.

Following this, Luke heads towards the surface of the Death Star, where a field of similarly vicious ground-based laser turrets and towers are negotiated before reaching the final obstacle: the trench. In this, Luke guns his ship down a deep gorge in the Death Star, dodging barriers and flack from the wall-mounted laser turrets, to reach the exhaust port at

► **Use the Pause Luke . . .**







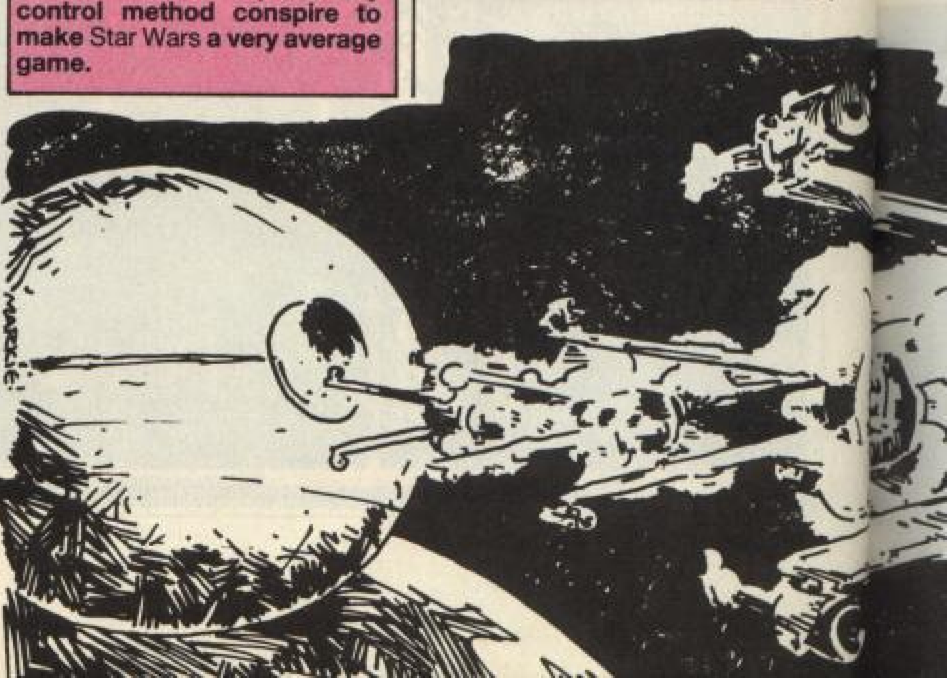


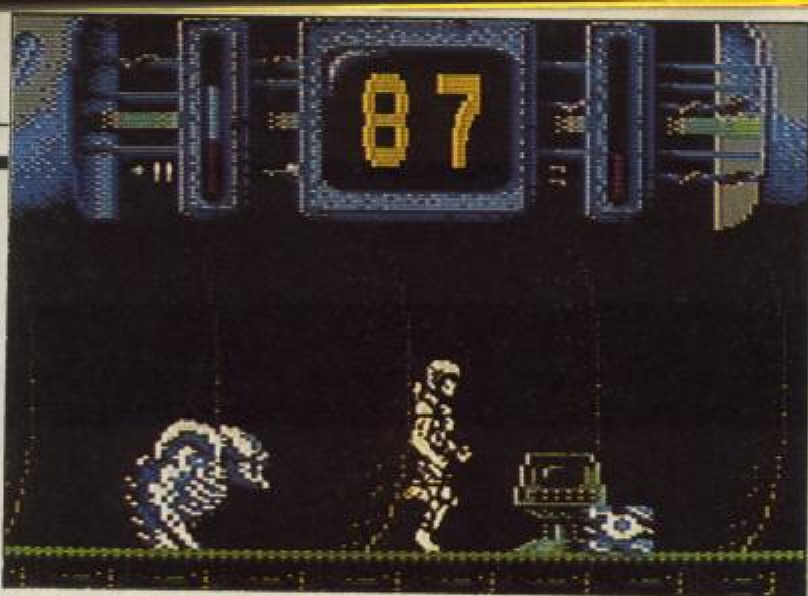
**Disappointment is the overwhelming feeling when considering** Star Wars**. I'm always slightly dubious when vector graphics are used on the humble 64, and although Domark have made a brave attempt, their conversion unfortunately falls short of the mark. The graphics are rapid, but the cost of the large frame update is heavy, suffering worst in the dogfight sequence, where the TIE-fighters go through their aerial ballet as if in a strobe light. The action is still there, especially in the trench sequence, which is by far the best part, but the arcade 'feel' has gone. Slow graphics and a truly crummy control method conspire to make** Star Wars **a very average game.**





**For the many millions of** Star Wars **fans waiting with baited breath for a stunning conversion, I have a feeling you're going to be disappointed. This is probably the best you can get on a 64 – but that still isn't very good. The main problem is that in keeping the speed, the animation has suffered terribly: when tie-fighters move, they do it in BIG jumps. In addition to this, the 'feel' is decidedly strange, as the programmers have used pilot controls. Having criticised the game so far, let me add that it has all the features of the original (except the speech), and is fairly playable.**






▶ Trantor, the Last Storm Trooper pegs down the corridor at speed



**When you first see this, it looks like a very up-market arcade adventure, with an enormous, brilliantly animated main character, a beautiful flame thrower weapon, and lots of little flying aliens to fry. It's quite easy to start playing, as you can get quite a long way before realising how badly you're doing, and the game structure itself is very simple, being just another in the 'shoot, pick up and move on' theme. However, this is its problem, since there's little to do other than shoot, pick up and move on. After a couple of sessions** Trantor **lost its appeal, and I don't think I'll return.**

**PRESENTATION 82%**
Good introductory sequence, with pleasant on-screen appearance. Free audio track on the 'B' side of the cassette.

**GRAPHICS 65%**
Bland backdrops, with a nicely animated main sprite.

**SOUND 48%**
Mediocre tunes and effects.

**HOOKABILITY 75%**
Success comes easy, and therefore the action is appealing.

**LASTABILITY 41%**
The gameplay isn't difficult, and once completed, interest swiftly wanes.

**OVERALL 55%**
An average arcade adventure with limited challenge.



**I've been a fan of this Atari classic ever since I first saw it way back in 1983. It's finally arrived on the 64, and isn't at all bad. I'm pleased to see that Domark have included all the original's features – in fact the game is perfect but for two things: the slow frame update, which causes things to jump about at an alarming rate, and the strange control method. The original arcade game has pilot controls, but feels like you're actually flying an X-wing – on the 64 it's ill-suited because there's no sensation of flight.** Star Wars**, like the arcade original, provides an enjoyable blast – but it's a shame that the action isn't faster or smoother.**

the far end.

Successfully blasting photon torpedoes into the port results in the destruction of the Death Star. Points are awarded and one unit of shielding added to the X-wing before Luke progresses to the next, more difficult level.

**PRESENTATION 83%**
The meagre instructions are more than compensated for by the in-game briefing and options.

**GRAPHICS 68%**
A valiant attempt at fast vector graphics, but as is so often the case, the quality suffers.

**SOUND 43%**
A fairly poor rendition of the *Star Wars* theme plays over the credits, and there are some uninspired sound effects.

**HOOKABILITY 69%**
The simple shoot 'em up aspect is appealing, but the control takes some getting used to, and the jerky display is confusing.

**LASTABILITY 55%**
Many tough levels lie ahead of a player who enjoys the action.

**OVERALL 70%**
*Star Wars* has all the coin-op's features, but is let down by slow speed.



# RYGAR

**US Gold, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys**

Armed with his spinning razor disk, Rygar is on an endless journey of violence and destruction across a horizontally scrolling landscape. The disc is swung in any direction to kill attackers, whose deadly touch eliminates one of Rygar's five lives. Occasionally bottomless pits are encountered, and are jumped over.

The action is split into levels, and Rygar has a fixed time limit to reach the end of each. If the timer expires, an indestructible monster appears and pursues Rygar at speed. Extra time is gained by picking up bonuses throughout the level, and bonus points, 'smart bombs' and extra lives are collected in similar fashion.

Sometimes, one of five magical icons appears, and is collected to improve Rygar's destructive powers and increase his bonus score at the end of a level.



**Having seen** Rygar **in the arcades, it made me wonder just what had happened during the 'conversion' process. Gone are the startling backdrops and the animation, leaving us with a simple and totally forgettable** Ghosts 'n' Goblins **variant. The action is hectic, but repetitive, while the graphics are unimpressive, with ill-defined sprites, badly detailed backdrops and gaudy use of colour. On the gameplay side, it's merely a question of stamina before the game is completed – a task that hardly sets the pulses racing. It's not that the game is rubbish, but what does** Rygar **offer that we haven't seen many times before?**



**The latest conversion from US Gold isn't disastrously bad, it's just totally bland. It doesn't look impressive, and both the background graphics and sprites lack definition and clarity. The gameplay is enjoyable at first, and offers quite a challenge, but after a while, it all gets a bit tedious – there's very little variety in the action, and consequently the appeal wears off quite quickly. Mind you, the same can be said about the arcade game – which is no great shakes.** Rygar **fans will probably find the conversion enjoyable, but on the whole it can't be called an essential purchase.**

**PRESENTATION 78%**
Plenty of useful options, but a long-winded message has to be endured at the start of every game.

**GRAPHICS 52%**
Gaudy backdrops, and the sprites lack definition.

**SOUND 68%**
A lively, if unimaginative tune, with some good sound effects during the game.

**HOOKABILITY 63%**
Very straightforward, but not overly exciting action.

**LASTABILITY 48%**
Although the game is tough, it doesn't really proffer much fun.

**OVERALL 57%**
Not the greatest of conversions, but it does hold a challenge.

▶ *Rygar* shows how to kick alien ass



# ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

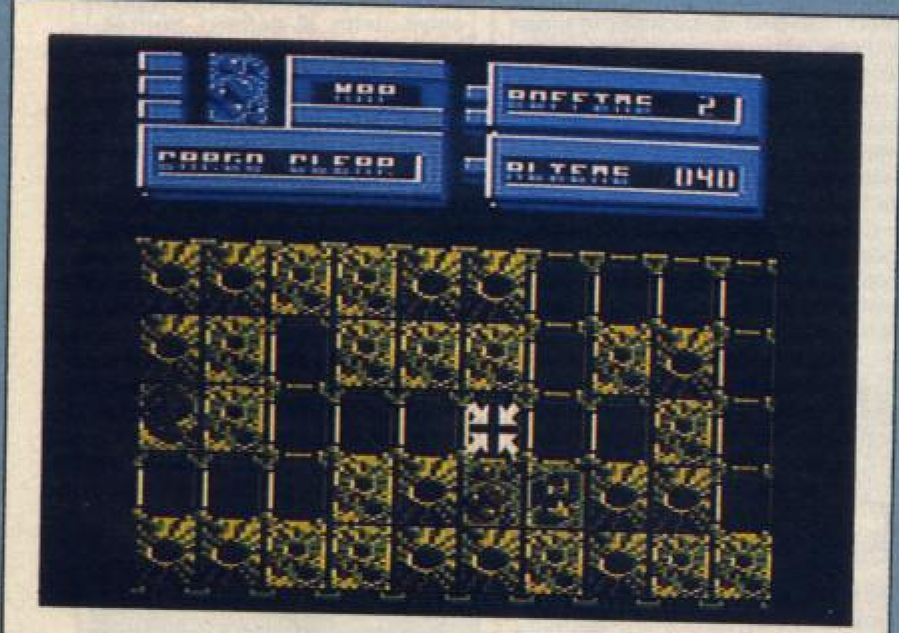
# RISK

**The Edge, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only**

●**A graphically superb shoot 'em up with plenty of depth and action**

The planet Christon 3, an important space weapons research centre, has been attacked by unidentified alien beings. The scientists working there have gone into hiding, and the projects under development remain hidden in underground tunnels . . .

The player responds to a Rapid Intercept Seek and Kill order, and is dropped onto the planet in an armoured Surface Skimmer at the remaining safe area – Homebase. Here, the computer is accessed to change the colour of the ship, border and map, the workshop entered to add extra weaponry to the Skimmer, and the map examined.




The map is displayed as a grid, with allied territory shown as filled blocks, and alien-occupied areas as black squares. The player may only enter a black sector adjacent to one already cleared of aliens.

The action begins when the player enters an alien controlled sector. The Skimmer is flown around the horizontally scrolling area and blasts any alien craft, which vary from solo jetpackers to armoured ground vehicles. All are hostile and fire when the Skimmer draws near, reducing its shield.

Occasionally, scientists are dis-




**After a long hiatus in releases from The Edge, they're at last back in the big time with** RISK, **a superbly polished shoot 'em up. Initially impressive, the graphics get better and better as you progress, eventually climaxing with the incredible parallax tunnel sequence. At first the ship flies like a brick, invoking a feeling of uneasiness, but the swift purchase of an anti-grav module puts things right, and the action becomes far more playable and rewarding.** RISK **is very enjoyable, and the progressive nature of the action provides enough depth and spice to make most people sit up and take note. There's definitely no risk involved in buying this.**

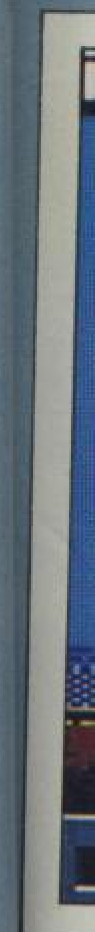


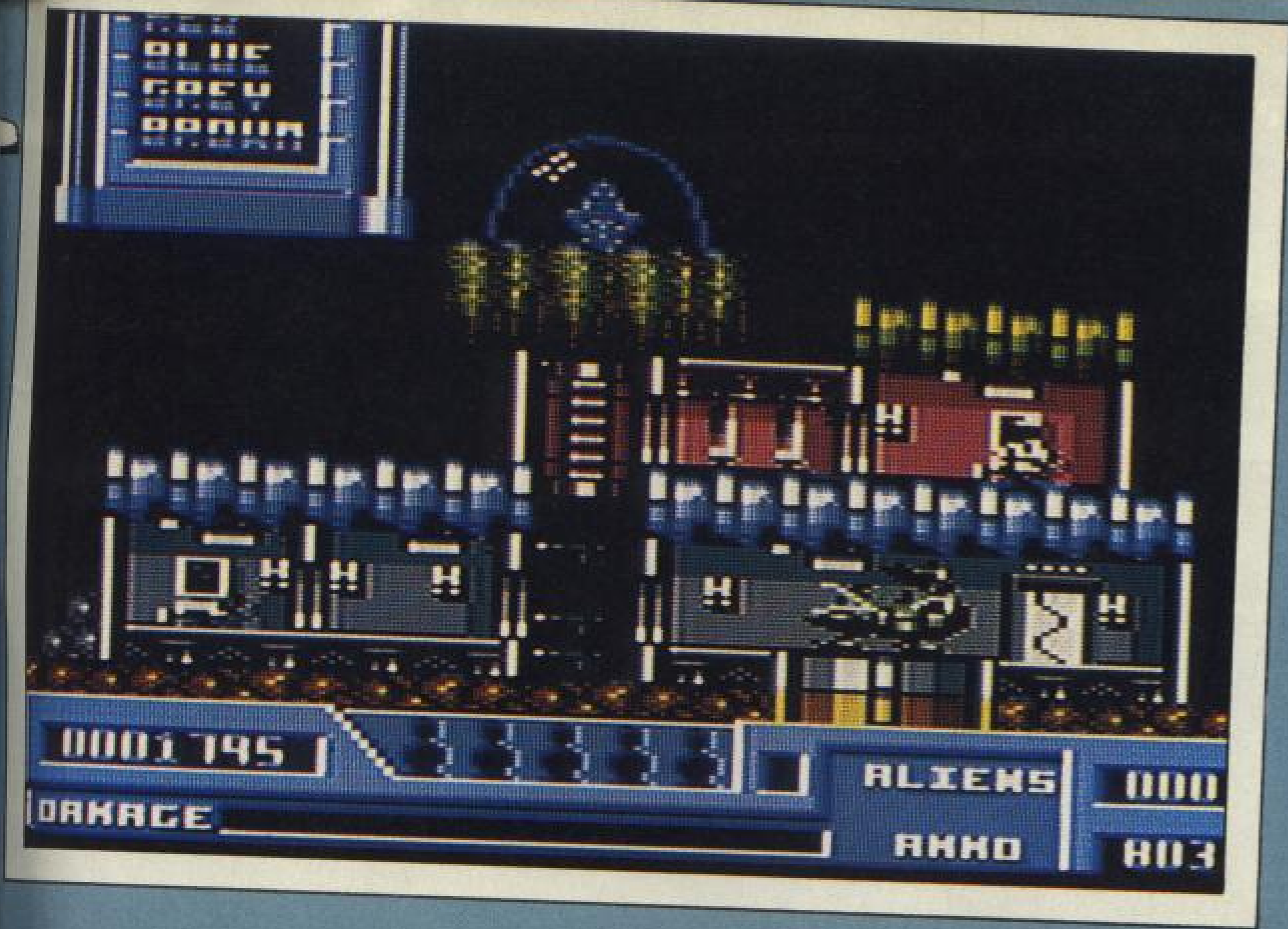

**From the very start,** RISK **looks impressive. The graphics are absolutely gorgeous, with stunning use of colour and superlative sprites. This beauty isn't just skin deep, either –** RISK **also plays extremely well. The gameplay has** Choplifter **overtones, but there are plenty of new twists making the action addictive and worthwhile. The extra weapons section is very appealing, and I particularly like the diversity of the add-ons. Most are added to enhance your own style of play, and not because they're vital to progress to higher levels. This customisation through choice gives a greater feeling of freedom, and makes the game even more absorbing. Although the action is ultimately repetitive, there's enough excitement generated on the higher levels to sustain interest and keep the player coming back for more.** RISK **is definitely one of the best shoot 'em ups to appear in a long time, and should provide plenty of Christmas cheer for blasting fans.**
















covered, and are picked up by landing nearby and letting them run to the Skimmer. Sometimes extra supply pods are dropped from a passing mothership, and are picked up when touched.

When a sector is cleared of all living things, the Skimmer is flown into the landing pad and enters an underground tunnel in which a series of platforms are found containing extra ammunition, parts and blueprints. The player may only land on one platform, and has one left to right pass to do so. If all platforms are missed, the Skimmer returns to Home- base.

Back at Homebase, the extra equipment gathered from the tunnel is used to either repair damage, recharge the blaster, or customise the ship. This process involves the expenditure of parts, blueprints and scientists collected previously. Extra features include thrusters to speed up the ship, retros to make it turn round faster, blasters to increase fire power, protective shields, and anti-grav.

With the changes selected, the player moves on to the next, more hazardous sector. The mission ends when too much damaged is sustained.




**This has to be quite a novelty: a shoot 'em up with some real thought put into it! RISK is extremely well designed, and a joy to play. The graphics are very crisp, fast moving and colourful, and the sound, although sparse, is contributory, rather than detrimental to the action. The progressive weapons are unusual in that the ship effectively starts below standard, and is built up to what would normally be the starting point for many games. The fact that the ship is effected by gravity makes control tricky at first, and tests the player's skill right from the start. The only drawback I can see, is that a player's interest may wane if he cannot equip his ship well enough to progress – repeatedly playing the beginning areas could become really boring! Despite this minor worry, I think you can buy the game assured of a superb blast for many weeks to come.**

### PRESENTATION 93%
Immaculate presentation throughout, with easy to use menus and excellent add-on system.

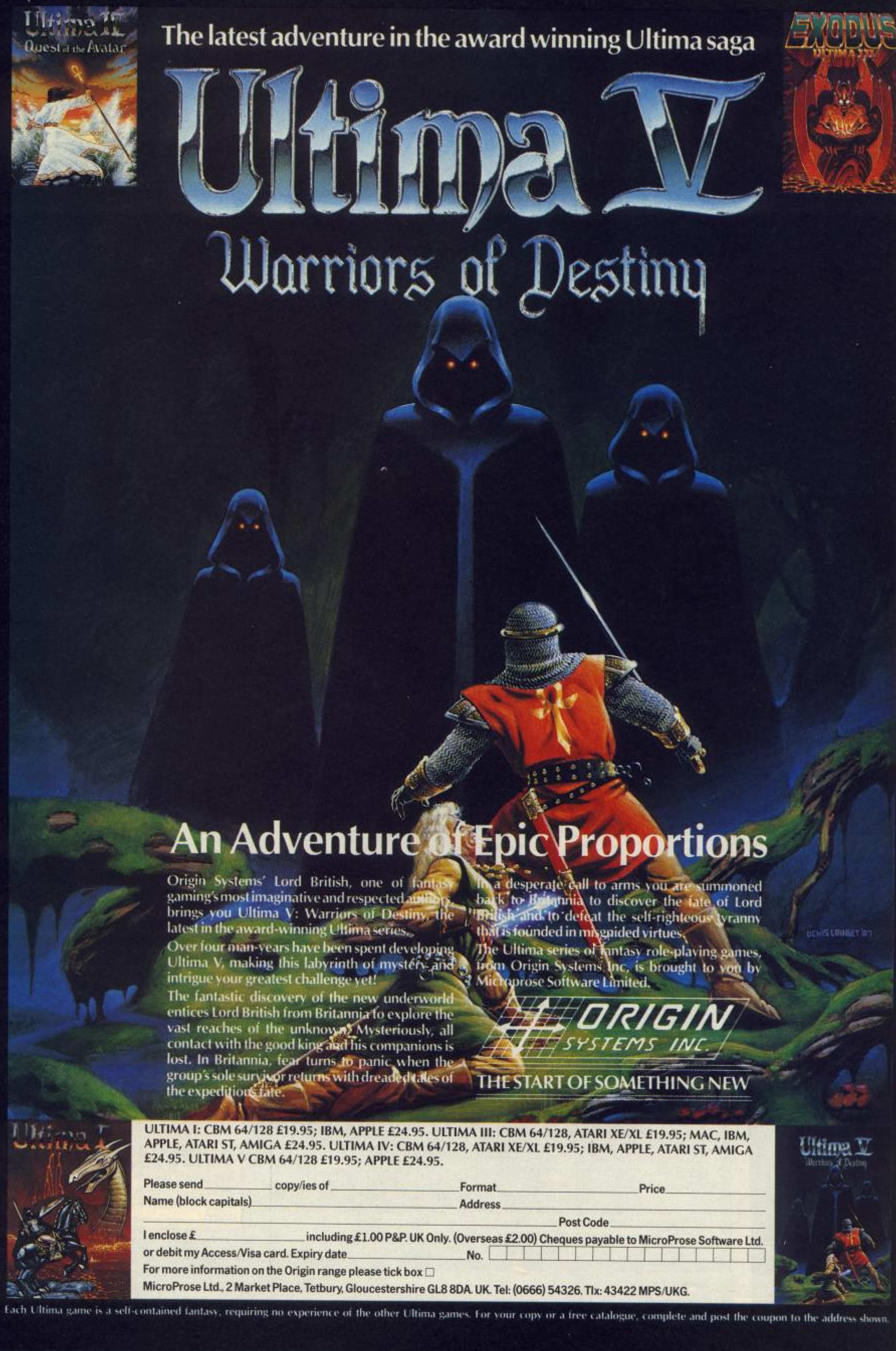
### GRAPHICS 94%
Ultra-smooth scrolling, and dozens of beautifully animated aliens.

### SOUND 86%
A very high quality title tune, and some useful, but limited sound effects.

### HOOKABILITY 89%
Although the blast 'em up section is straightforward, the picking-up extras aspect can be a little confusing.

### LASTABILITY 82%
Plenty of sectors to clear, and lots of extra weaponry to experiment with.

## OVERALL 90%
A superbly presented shoot 'em up, with enough intellectual challenge to keep the entertainment going.



Ultima IV
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The latest adventure in the award winning Ultima saga
EXODUS
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Origin Systems' Lord British, one of fantasy gaming's most imaginative and respected authors, brings you Ultima V: Warriors of Destiny, the latest in the award-winning Ultima series.
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# MEGA MASTER SYSTEM

Once again the entries came flooding in, but it was no surprise as the overall prize was just a teeny bit desirable – Mastertronic are giving away a *Sega Master System* complete with light phaser, a pair of 3D glasses, a Sega control stick (as well as the control cards included with the set) and 10 software titles. Wow! Who do you suppose won this amazing prize? Well, it was **Paul Smith**, Derbyshire, DE5 1EJ. He filled the blank speech bubbles of Professor Dogslap's comic strip with the most humorous script. The next 50 people will be receiving a copy of *Agent X II* through the post very soon . . .

**Simon Baxter, Beverley, North Humberside; Damon Smith, Herts, WD2 6LE; Zzap! reader, East Sussex, TN34 2JZ; Roberto Giusarma, Norfolk, NR6 6JR; William Wong, Wiltshire, SN15 4PX; Tariok Marok, Birmingham, B21 8PD; Harris Marcou, Kent, ME3 7JE; Paul Welch, Luton, Bedfordshire; Stuart Hopkinson, Kent, TN15 8RP; Kelvin Nash, London, E6 1HQ; Duncan Schmelich, Notts, NG16 3FN; Dan Stride, Dorset, BH23 3QF; Shaun Moore, Devon, PL6 8TP; Stephen Bond, West Midlands, B72 1HY; James Earl, Middlesex, HA2 9JE; Sam Monnie, Beds, LU1 5EX; Christian Besser, Essex, RM6 5RP; David Morgan, Mid Glamorgan; Adam Carroll, Essex, IG5 0QH; Lloyd Buckley, Essex, RM11 2PS; David Bone, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2JF; Richard Thompson, Shropshire, SY11 4JE; Derek Grantham, Glasgow, G15 7RH; Allan Dean, Morayshire, IV30 3ET; Mark Currums, Merseyside, L62 6DN; David Kennedy, Inverness-shire, PH33 6JT; James Gray, Glasgow, G21 3PP; Christopher Ray, Gwent, NP1 0AY; David Sargeant, Staffs, St2 7AL; Paul Evans, Cornwall, TR15 3NY; Zzap! reader, Cheshire, WA3 7LZ; Matthew Hawkins, Kent, CT5 4AN; Peter Dunn, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE6 4DW; Charlie Chang, West Yorkshire, BD3 9ND; Mark Reynard, West Yorkshire, BD22 7DX; Darren Horton, Derbyshire, DE55 4ER; Nicky Lambert, Ilford, Essex; Jonathan Hudson, Sunderland, SR6 8EW; Michael Johnstone, Norfolk, NR13 4JJ; Matthew Bloor, Essex, SS7 3PW; Nick Hawkes, London, SE5 9QR; Geoff Robertson, Merseyside, WA11 8DS; Sanjay Gohil, London, E1 8PQ; Adrian Booth, Lincolnshire, PE21 7PY; John Edmonds, Essex, CO16 8DD; Jason Baker, Kent, CT1 1TS; S D Jehan, Guernsey, Channel Islands; Jamie Macdonald, East Lothian, EH39 4AW; Owen Sloman, London, N10 3NA; Slade Garrett, Hereford, HR1 3EE.**

# SUPER STARFOX

Winning the original artwork from the *Starfox* advertisement was easy enough – all you had to do was find the relevant words in our wonderful wordsquare. **Leon Lewis** of Burntwood, WS7 8US was the first correct entry pulled out of the bag, so he can look forward to the picture and a copy of the game arriving at his front door very soon. The other 25 copies of *Starfox* that Ariolasoft generously want to give away are being sent to . . .

**Paul Syrett, Cornwall, TR1 1HH; Rodger Gibbs, Oxon, OX16 7HA; N Charelmagne, London, NW10 2UP; John Hadcock, Manchester, M31 4JU; Stewart McCombie, West Midlands, B92 9DH; Christopher Turton, Kent, TN9 1LW; M D Whitehead, Notts, NG24 1NN; David Sen, Arkly, Barnet; Guy Chapman, Wiltshire, SN10 1ET; Nigel Richard Bonsler, West Midlands, CV1 5RW; Philip Nicholson, Hants, RG27 0NY; Andrew Fraser, Staffs, ST14 8DH; Peter Brown, Dorset, BH16 5BX; David Watts, Hants, SO2 2QU; Jonathan Wareham, Derby, DE3 5EG; C C Unwin, Huntingdon, PE17 2EZ; W Campion, Essex, CM1 5EH; O Shah, West Midlands, WS5 3HF; R C Allan, Surrey, 4QX; Christopher Ward, London, N14 7DE; Mark Phillips, Bristol, BS19 3NE; Andrew Johnson, Cheshire, SK8 3EN; Mr M S Jardine, South Wales, CF6 7PJ; Robin Eastham, Lancs., PR7 5NU; Mr J Wiggell, HQ 1 ARMD Div, BFPO 32.**







# FUNKY FLUNKY

All you had to do for Piranha's *Flunky* competiton was describe some humorous tasks that Flunky could perform for the Royals. The funniest entry came in from **Geoffrey Hammond**, Surrey, GU25 4EW, and his shining wit has earned himself a fabulous Phillips Cassette Player – what a lucky chap! But, wait! There's also a second prize of a Sony Walkman for the runner-up – **Mark Wallace, London, N2 9JN.** All is not lost if you aren't one of the two aforementioned winners, because you could still be amongst the 40 runners-up listed below who'll each receive a copy of *Flunky* . . .

**Garry Kinnear, Edinburgh, EH12 5EG; Paul Welch, Luton, LU2 7PP; Nigel Willetts, West Midlands, DY8 4QQ; Martyn Jones, South Glamorgan, CF35 5DT, Chris Willett, Staffordshire, ST5 0JE; Mr A Norcutt, Middlesex, HA0 2HN; M Griffiths, Dorset, BH12 3HA; Carl Maxwell, London, W10 6UA; Elliott Moran, Wiltshire, B93 9JB; Paul Wiseman, Middlesex, HA7 2PP; Craig Scott, Cumbria, CA2 4DB; Capt J G Robson, 11 Armd Wksp Reme, BFPO 106; Leyland Perree, Cornwall, PL12 4RD; Mark Smith, Nottingham, NG2 7GJ; Keith Gabriel, West Yorkshire, HD4 6LQ; Stuart Parsons, Cheshire, SK9 6LT; J Davey, South Devon, TQ2 7RH; Mark Alldred, Sheffield S18 5YW; Philip Turner, Devon, EX17 2DH; Simon Edwards, Cheshire, SK10 3NN; D Matthews, Rochford, SS4 1SA; Craig Rowlings, Tyne and Wear, SR6 7QY; Darren Moore, Hampshire, GU30 7DD; Craig Roberts, Essex, IG22 9HE; Paul Spraggons, Middlesex, TW1 1ER; M L Thomas, South Wales, CF31 3DA; Jamie Foran, West Sussex, RH17 6BJ; David Davison, 7th Signal Regiment, BFPO 15; Tim Doel, Camberley, GU16 5PW; Jonathan Richards, Nuneaton, CV11 4QJ; Mark Brew, Berkshire, RG11 2NZ; John MacPherson, Inverness-shire, PH33 6NJ (4694); Nicholas Edgcombe, Cornwall, TR4 9DR; Andrew Bruce, Manchester, M31 3JA; Barry Markey, Surrey, RH6 9RP; John Parish, Darrol Hall, NE20 9AD; Craig Barber, Bristol, BS15 2UX; Phil Gado, East Sussex, BN27 2HD; James Witney, Nr Alford, LN13 9QS; ZZAP! reader, Sheffield, S10 1ET.**

## CHART VOTING WINNERS

**WINNER** (£40.00 voucher and ZZAP! T-Shirt): Ian Robinson, London, N17 6XD.

**Runners-up** (ZZAP! T-Shirt and cap): Neil Archer, Wolverhampton, WV11 3DF; Kenny Ho, West Lothian, EH54 5BH; Roy Matthews, Nottingham, NG11 7DX; Eric Steele, Manchester, M35 0DS.



# SAMPLE TH DELIGHTS A FANTAST CASIO SYN

## COURTESY OF OCEAN

Ocean's latest coin-op conversion, *Rastan Saga*, is a hack 'n' slay game, presenting something of a cross between *Barbarian* and *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*.

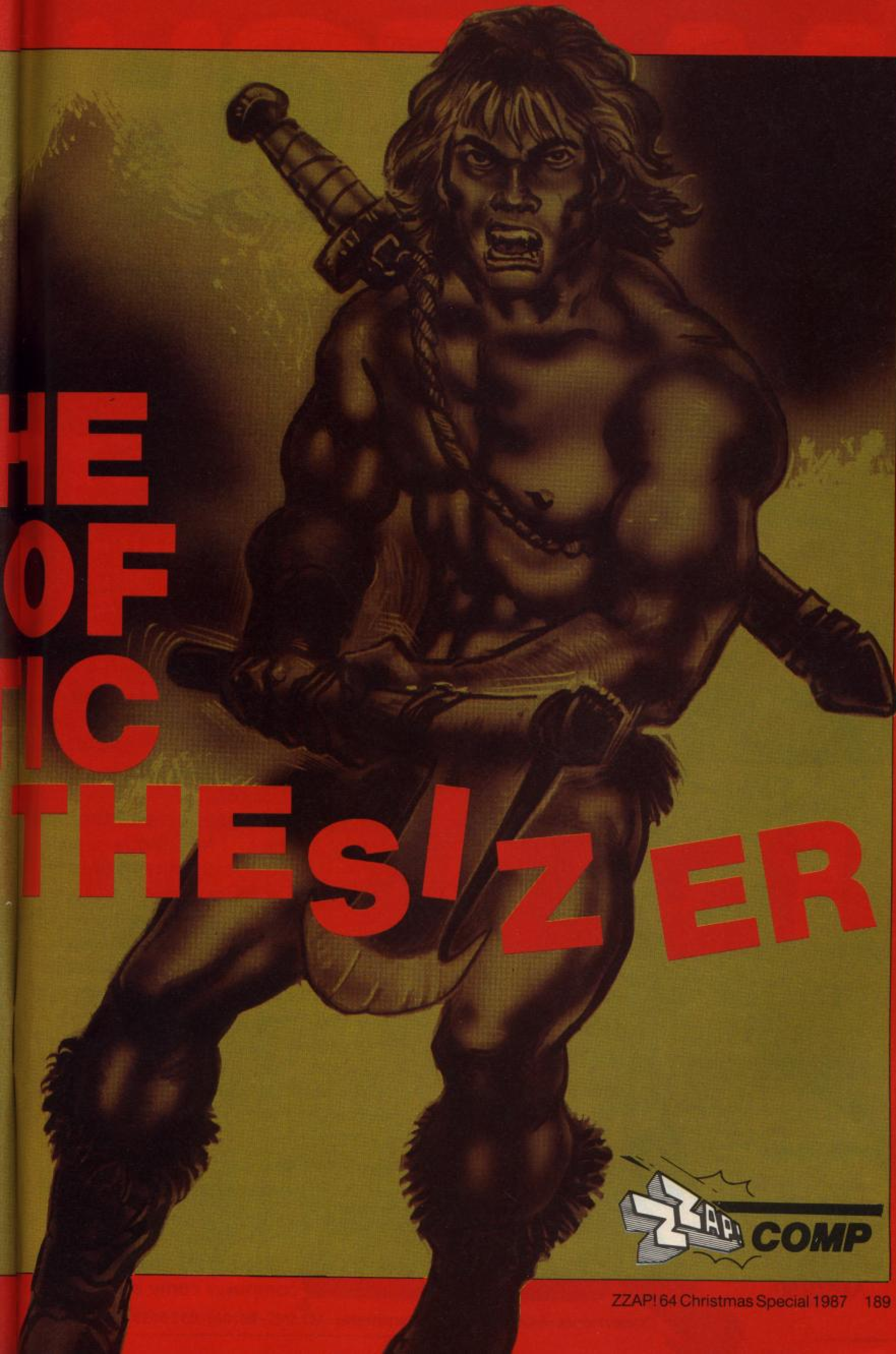
As well as having some pretty neat graphics, those with a musical ear will also appreciate the Martin Galway soundtrack. In fact, those same people will be very interested in the competition prizes that Ocean have on offer . . .

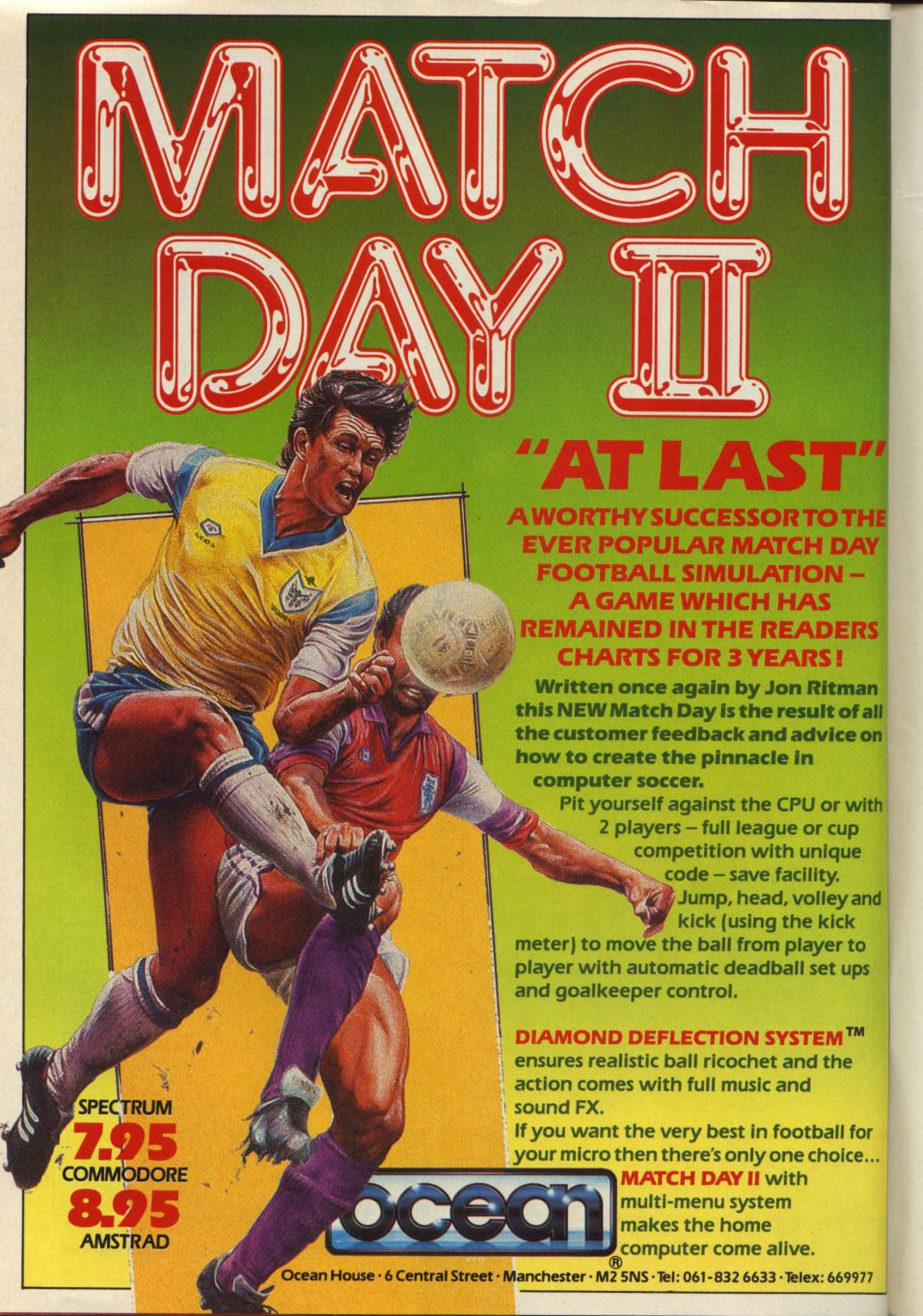
If you fancy making music yourself, you could do a lot worse than win the first prize – a Casio SK400 keyboard, worth around £250! This little ebony and ivory beauty features stereo sound and a built-in sampler, allowing you an almost unlimited array of voices.

There are also two first runners-up prizes of a brilliant Ocean sports hold-all, ten Ocean games and an Ocean T-shirt, while 20 second runners-up are to be given a copy of *Rastan Saga*!

To walk off with one of the aforementioned prizes, all you have to do is design a musical instrument using the sort of items that a stone age warrior might find. You can use bones, rocks, bits of animal intestines, plants – you name it. The superb first prize synthesizer will go to the entry displaying the most imagination, humour and cheek.

As usual, entries should be sent to **RASTAN MUSICOMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than January the 14th, 1988. Include the name of your tribe, cave number and individual drum beat, if you have one.


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# COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU

GREMLIN




Gremlin Graphics are set to follow up the technically stunning *Cosmic Causeway* with an unusual puzzle game, *Deflektor*. The player steers a laser beam through a course of strange obstructions using sets of rotating mirrors, and destroys the energy blobs that cover the screen.

The laser beam is always on, and simply continues as far as it can and stops when it's directed into an object which absorbs it. Mirrors re-direct the laser's path, and their angle is changed by rotating them.

Transmitters absorb the beam and launch them elsewhere, usually into mines, or back into itself to cause an overheat. Once all the blobs have been destroyed, the beam is steered into a second generator to complete the level.

*Deflektor* should be available soon, costing £9.99 on cassette and £11.99 on disk – and there'll be a full review next issue.

INFOGRAMES

One of the strangest games we've seen in recent months is Infogrames' *Sidewalk*. Set in the summer of 1985, the player takes the role of a man trying to get to the Live Aid concert. Unfortunately, his motorbike has been stolen, along with both his and his girlfriend's tickets.

The player's quest is displayed in perspective 3D as he traverses some of the shadier parts of town. All the bike's components have to be recovered from the gang of thugs that stole it, and more tickets bought within the seven game-hours time limit – Live Aid stops for no man! The graphics are excellent, and there are some fiendish puzzles to solve – more news next issue!

► *Sidewalk* boasts some lovely cartoon-style graphics






► Are you a budding boy racer? In that case take a test drive . . .

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

If you've always dreamed of owning a Lotus or a Lamborghini, but can't think up the blockbusting game necessary to provide the funds, Electronic Art's latest, *Test Drive* should be of interest. It gives the player the chance to drive any one of five stunning supercars: Lotus, Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche and Chevrolet Corvette. The player attempts to race between two points within a set time limit in the best traditions of race games, while avoiding police speed traps and falling rocks in mountainous regions. ►

# PREVIEW

Has anyone NOT heard of *Out Run*? It involves the player racing along a five stage course in his red Ferrari, with his girlfriend by his side. The arcade game is absolutely stunning, and boasts some amazing graphics and music.

What has this got to do with the 64? Well, US Gold have recently acquired the 'official licence' and are currently converting it to the Commodore. The screen shot looks impressive, but whether or not the game manages to capture the spirit of the original arcade machine is another thing entirely – read the review next month and find out.




► A gallon into a pint pot? *Out Run* on the 64 . . .

## ENGLISH SOFTWARE

Following the success of English Software's *Knight Games*, programmer Jon Williams has just completed *Knight Games II* after nine months's work.

The game takes the mediaeval action of *KG I* and catapults it into the far future, with the player taking the role of a space knight, travelling to a distant planet to partake in a tournament.

The twin cassette package contains three individual 64K games, which are loaded and played separately once the second two access codes have been earned.

In the first section, the knight leaves his home planet and rescues a variety of creatures in a *Defender* style shoot 'em up. Three different landscapes are traversed, the latter ones being accessed only when the requisite amount of men and beasts are collected.

Completing the first section gives the access code for the second game, which features a space battle high above the destination planet. Again, three scenes are negotiated, with the first being a straightforward shoot 'em up, where a remote craft is controlled and viewed from the mothership. The next scene is viewed from the rear of the mothership, and a cross-hair is directed upon attacking enemy craft. Finally, a *Space Invaders* style battle takes place



► Robotic knights prepare to do battle



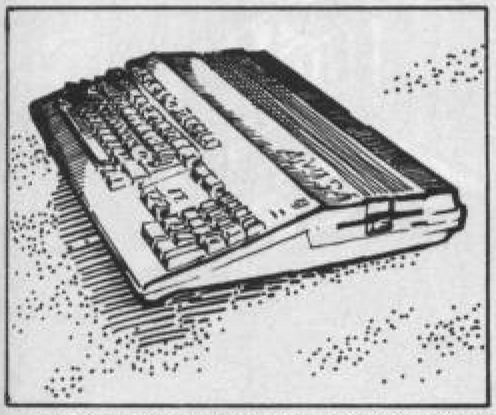

► A castle of the future provides one of the many varied backdrops in *Knight Games II*



# The MEMORY STORE

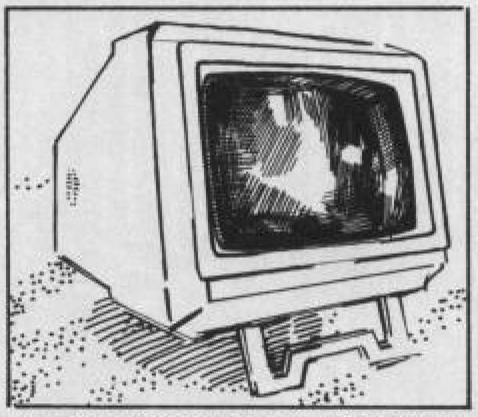
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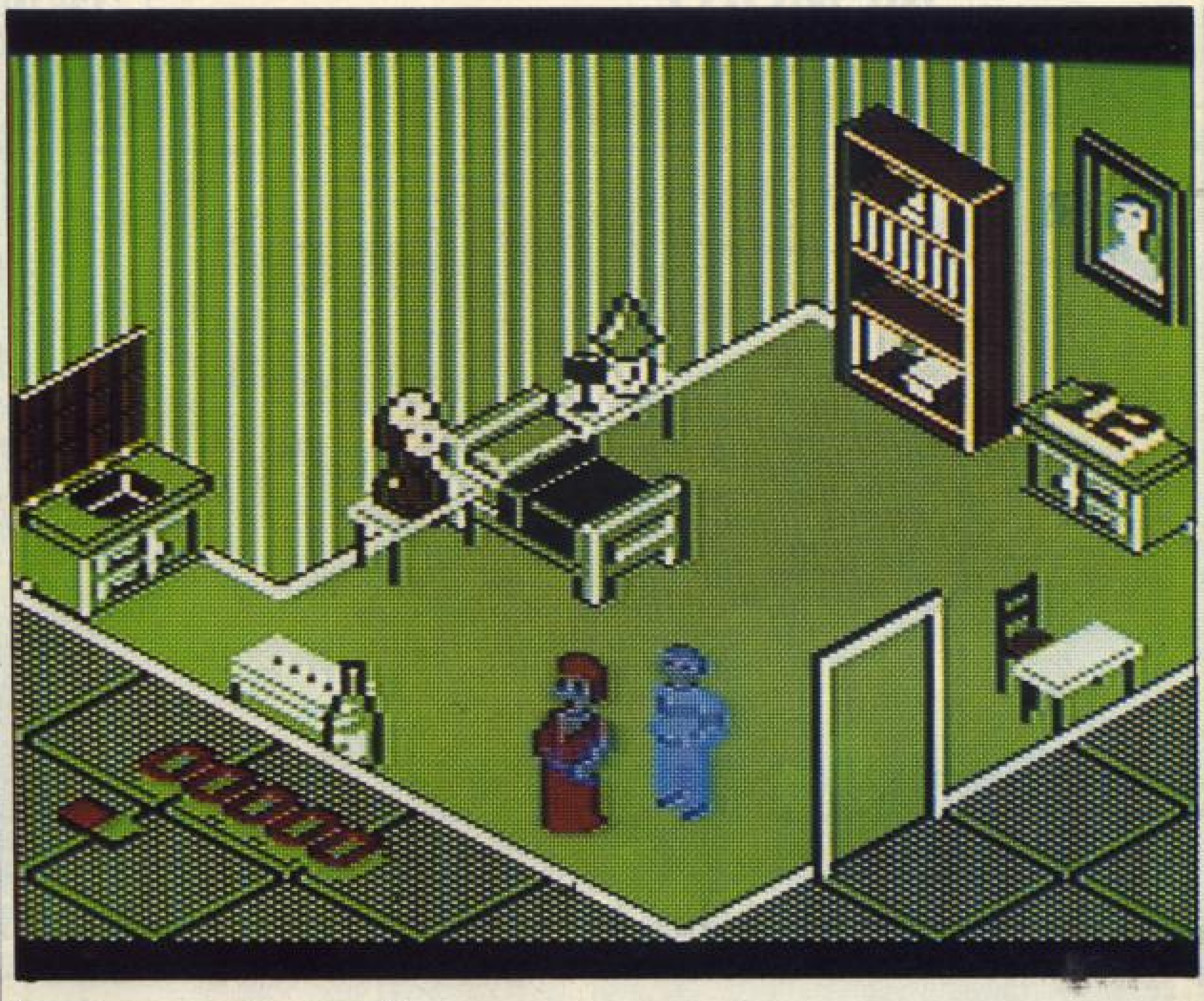
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within the mothership's docking bay. After successfully withstanding the enemy attack, the knight accesses the third game and makes his way down to the planet surface.

The final stage is more reminiscent of the earlier *Knight Games*, and presents three futuristic combat scenarios: jet jousting, light sabres and photon chains. The knight faces three adversaries, controlled by another player or the computer, and the action is set across some brilliant graphical backdrops. There's no distinct end game, but methods of combat are honed and a high score accumulated instead.

English Software's 192K's worth of game is to be released in January, and will be reviewed as soon as possible.



▶ *Inside Outing* boasts some fast isometric perspective 3D action

## ocean

*Gryzor* is a fairly successful arcade machine, and has been selected as Ocean's next conversion.

The horizontally scrolling action starts in an alien forest, where the player runs left to right, firing a stream of bullets, ducking enemy fire and somersaulting obstacles. Occasionally, extra weapons appear, allowing the player to increase his destructive powers. At the end of a level, the fighter enters an alien stronghold, where he's confronted by corridors full of deadly electric force.

Early versions of the game look impressive, and Ocean seem to have captured much of the original machine's look and feel.

▶ Ocean's latest blasting arcade conversion is set in a strange environment




## THE EDGE

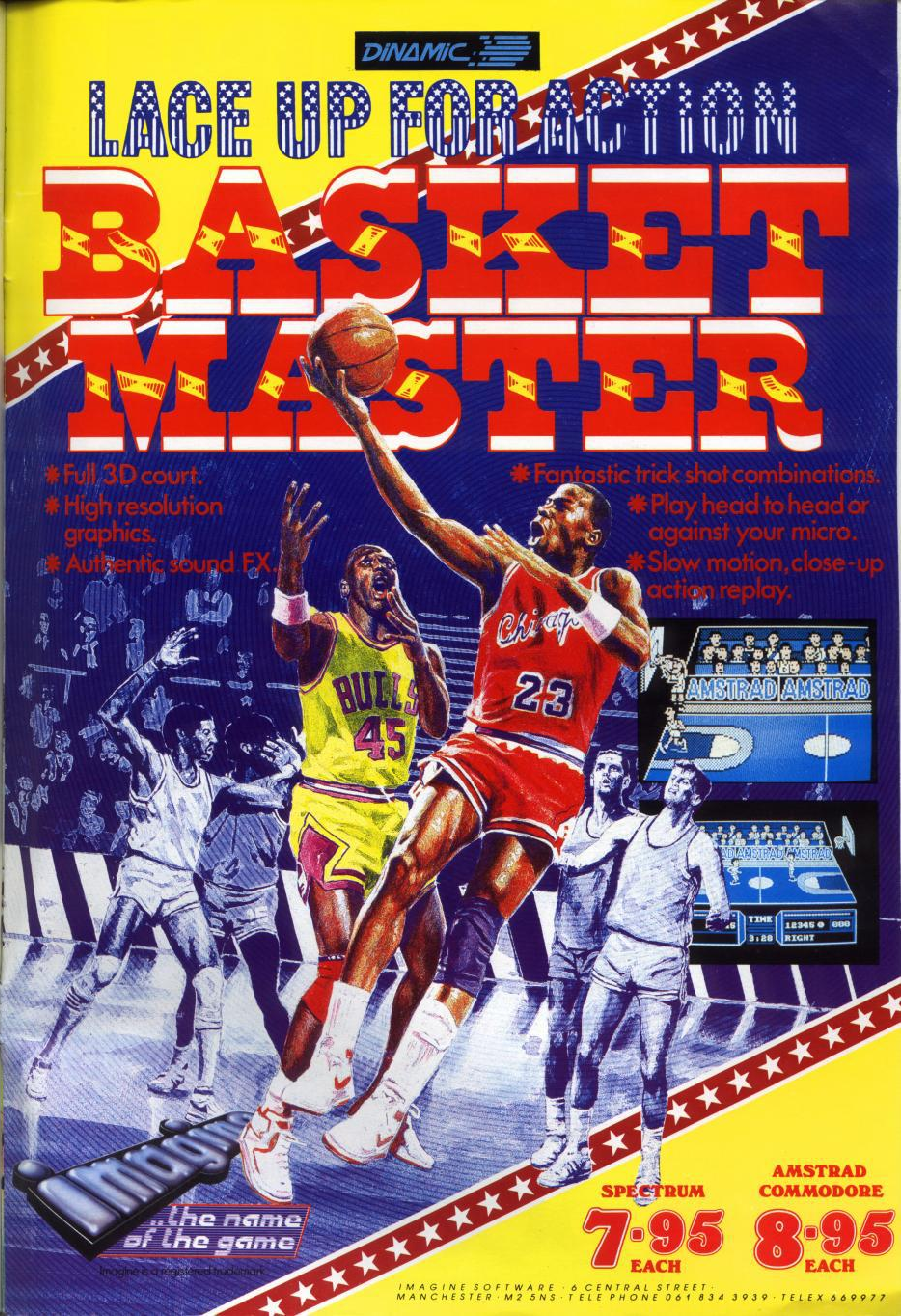
The Edge have been fairly quiet over the past year, and have released only two games: *Shao-Lin's Road* and *RISK*. Their latest release – *Inside Outing* – is therefore quite notable. It's best described as a full colour *Fairlight* clone, and requires the player to explore the rooms of a large house and find twelve gems. When they're all recovered, they're taken to the house owner to complete the mission.

The house is filled with movable objects, many of which are necessary to solve the devious puzzles that hide the gems.

So far the game looks very promising, with very fast 3D graphics. A full review will appear in Issue 34.

▶ The player readies himself in the face of adversity




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